

THE MIRZA.

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VISIT V.

DURING the winter, the Shah remained constant to the walls of his palace in Tehran, but on the first opening of spring, he ordered the summer residence of the Takht Kajar, its gardens, fountains, and kiosks to be prepared, and thither he repaired, taking with him only a few of his favourites, courtiers and ladies of the harem, for the purpose of enjoying the invigorating air of the mountains, and the delights of the returning season. Among those who accompanied his Majesty, was my friend the poet laureat, who, when the excursion was over, invited me to visit him.

He informed me that during his stay at the Takht, the Shah having settled himself in one of the summer-houses, whose upper rooms command an extensive view over the plain, and which also embrace the whole extent of

the city—had devoted a whole afternoon to quiet and repose, and ordered him to relate a story.

On this occasion, his Majesty deviated from the usual routine of the court, having allowed women to be present, and in consequence had ordered the poet to be so placed that his voice might be heard whilst he could not see the persons of the King and his ladies. He then related the story, which we have just recorded, and he now informed me (as he afterwards heard) that the effect which it produced upon the women was incredulity—incredulity that such a being as Fatmeh could exist. He added, such is the narrow compass of their intellect, that they willingly believe in the existence of giants as tall as cypress trees, or magicians who can turn a mountain into gold ; but of the existence of a virtuous and magnanimous woman, they are incredulous.

His Majesty in a subsequent conversation applauded him very much for having selected such a story for such an occasion ; for he avowed himself pleased, that his ladies should be taught that woman, when her energies are

roused, can exercise them as efficiently, and with as much spirit as man.

My friend then told me that the Shah, whose mind is devoted to literature, and particularly to poetry, conversed with him freely upon the arts of invention and story telling. With respect to invention, his Majesty spoke sensibly, and for a monarch very modestly, for he avowed that he had often endeavoured to invent a story, but without success, adducing for a reason, that in order to be able to invent, it is necessary to possess a stock of facts beforehand, upon which to found invention.

“A King,” he said, “cannot acquire such a store with the same facility as one who has the power of roaming about the world, in all countries and among all ranks of people. The man who can do that best, should he be endowed with other requisite qualities of the mind, will be the most successful storyteller. Of poetry, the range may be less, for sensations exist in every heart, and they form the ground work of that species of invention. His Majesty then requested me,” said the Mirza, “in my next essay, to turn my thoughts to matters miraculous and supernatural. He

conceived," he said, "that he himself might compose a story, when he could bring jins, giants and magicians to his assistance: for whenever a difficulty occurred, it was easy to introduce a jin to set it right, and that nothing was so consolatory to a heroine as the certainty, when held in durance vile by a giant, that she might be emancipated by the power of a magician—but," he added, "unless I have those helps, I confess, I feel myself greatly at a loss, for men and women must be what Allah has made them, and it is ever a difficult undertaking to conform to truth."

The Mirza then informed me, that in furtherance of his Majesty's wish, he had composed a story, founded upon a circumstance, miraculous and supernatural.

"But," he added, "far from finding it easy, I have on the contrary, laboured under much difficulty to make it at all interesting. It is easy, in truth, as his Majesty remarked, to introduce the machinery of fabulous and unearthly beings, but the art is, to do so with an appearance of probability, which ought to make the hearer feel that such things might be. If I had

opened the tale by saying, once upon a time there existed a giant so immense, that while he stood upon the earth, he rested his back against the moon, and warmed his hands at the sun : such images would be called extravagant, and preposterous. Or, had I said, that my heroine, apprehending the persecutions of a tyrant, had by the power of a peri thrown herself into an impending cloud, and dissolving herself upon him in a torrent of rain, had drowned him and his followers ; such an assertion would so totally destroy verisimilitude, that the effect could only produce ridicule. But, in the story, which I will now relate, I have adopted just so much of what is supernatural, as I hope will give an air of semblance and possibility to my narrative, and this without alarming or greatly offending common sense. I have carried a single incongruity, through a course of natural consequences, which has approached a natural conclusion."

I quite agreed with my friend in his remarks and added, " that the reason why the "Tales of the Thousand and one Nights," are so agreeable

to children is, that their minds not having yet ascertained what is truth, they can bear the recital of stories in which giants, fairies, geniis and magicians, act a principal part with great satisfaction, seeing that their senses have not acquired that degree of experience to feel shocked by impossibilities."

We then settled ourselves in a small room, situated over the entrance gate of his house, called a *Balakhoneh*, or upper house, which, enjoying the shade of the chenar tree, situated immediately before it, as well as the music of a rushing stream, he emphatically called a poet's nest. Here he said he could enjoy meditation, apart from the world, though still in it, surrounded by cheerful objects, and yet not annoyed by obtrusion. We seated ourselves upon his carpet, each with a kalia in hand, and after the enjoyment of a few whiffs, which are ever to the Persian a sort of preliminary, and often an emblem of what he has to say, my friend entered upon his narrative as follows:—

HISTORY OF MOBAREK SHAH AND THE
MAGICIAN.

AMONG the successors of the great Jenghiz Khan, one was called Mobarek Shah, to whom there occurred an adventure so singular, and which produced consequences so full of results, that had the narrative thereof fallen into the hands of a professed spinner of wit, we doubt not but that he might have composed several pleasant books. We are told that he lived in the city of Cashgar, and that he was a Prince of amiable qualities, a great lover of justice, and devoted to the good of his people. He was ever active and zealous in searching out abuses, and frequently strolled about the city in disguise, first adopting one character then another, by which means, he not only became generally acquainted with the tempers and humours of his subjects, but often acquired hints from their conversation upon the art of governing them.

It so happened that in one of these rambles, he determined to refresh his person by taking

a hot bath, and for that purpose he entered the principal *hummum* of the city, disguised as a respectable merchant, wearing the usual sheep-skin cap, which was, indeed, commonly adopted by all ranks, from the monarch to the peasant. Having performed the necessary ablutions, he lay himself down on a carpet, in his bathing clothes, in order to cool previously to dressing. He had scarcely done so, when a hard featured, weather-beaten man, coarsely dressed, made his appearance, and spreading a carpet close to where Mobarek Shah lay extended, began to undress himself preparatory to entering the bath. He possessed a quick and penetrating eye, and slowly divesting himself of the shawl round his waist and folding up his cloak, he cast his eyes about him with an inquisitive look, and particularly upon his neighbour, whose handsome clothes appeared to attract his notice.

The hall in which this took place was surrounded by a lofty cupola, lines being passed across it in various directions, on which were hung the bathing linen to dry. Surrounding it, on elevated platforms, were spread carpets,

upon which, those who had bathed were reposing, whilst other carpets were ready prepared for those who might be expected. The bathing attire consisted of a white napkin round the head, of a large shawl or wrapper thrown loosely over the body, and of a second wrapper tied round the waist, falling to the ancles, and the congregation thus attired and in repose, looked like corpses laid out in their winding sheets in a large tomb. Such was now the case—not a word was uttered—no one moved about, excepting the bathing attendants, who presented a pipe, coffee, or sherbet to those just issued from the bath, and the whole was conducted with a decency and decorum, which proved how gentle were the manners of the good people of Cashgar.

On this occasion, just as the stranger before mentioned, and whom I shall call Chacal Beg, was about to take off his shirt, having already put on his middle wrapper, his neighbour the Shah reposing with closed eyes; quiet prevailing throughout the hall, at that moment, a strange and unearthly rum-

bling sound was heard, and instantly succeeded by so violent and so sudden a concussion, that soon all the inmates of the building were aroused and thrown into alarm by the awful consciousness of an earthquake, and as a poet said, all the lions were turned into lionesses from very fear. Without a moment's thought, every one jumped up and rushed out of the building, all excepting Chacal, who paused and looked around him.

The earthquake disturbed all the dust in the building, which flying about blinded men's eyes, and greatly increased the confusion—the linen dropped from the lines, the long poles which reposed against the walls, used for extending the linen fell with a crash; the tin and brass pots, the crockery, and things suspended on high fell—and the even walls which had stood for ages, were heard to crack, and in some parts rent from top to bottom. During this confusion, Chacal stood unmoved—the clothes of the bathers had dropped from their places and were strewn about the floor. He deliberately began to dress himself again, but instead of

returning to his own, he coolly helped himself to those of his neighbour, the Shah Mobarek—he put on his caba, adopted the shawl around the waist, covered himself with his handsome cloak, and lastly fitted on his cap, leaving his own garments, with his weather beaten cap, to the possession of whomsoever might choose to adopt them. Having so done, he slipped out of the bath by a back door, and finding himself in the street, strode away in haste, leaving that quarter of the town as far behind him as he could. He entered the great bazaars, where he found all the world in a high state of consternation, and mixing in the crowd, at length entered a barber's shop with the intention of getting his head shaved.

The barber was engaged in shaving, and when Chacal appeared, he said to him :

“Light of my eyes you are welcome, sit, have a little patience, and I will soon be at your service.” As he continued to use his razor, he also continued to exercise his tongue, saying, “although we have had a misfortune in the earthquake, yet praise be to Allah, you are come at a fortu-

nate hour for shaving. You slave has made use of his astrolabe this morning, and the moon tells him we may diminish the quantity of hair in the world with safety. God be thanked, we are understanders of things! May the riches of the Shah increase, his kingdom is not wanting in astrologers—Cashgar is a blessed place.” Upon this, having finished his customer’s adjustment, and duly washed and trimmed him up, he invited Chacal to take his place, to which that personage acceded, after doffing his newly acquired cap, depositing it on the seat he had just quitted.

When this new head was placed before the barber he exclaimed,

“Mashallah! wonderful head have we got here, the wise man is known before he speaks, the fool is known because he speaks. The wise recognise each other, whilst the fool thinks all are fools but himself.”

He then began his work, exclaiming and making use of flattering expressions, to which Chacal listened in silence. During this interval, the customer who had been shaved, retreating to the place where Chacal had left his

cap, was taken up in inspecting that commodity with evident marks of intense curiosity: turning it first to the left then to right, he looked within it, and then examined the piece of shawl sewn on the top. Having done this with an expression of surprise not unmingled with awe, he gazed upon Chacal, still continuing his survey of the cap, at one time putting it down, then taking it up again, when feeling something hard within the lining, he inserted his hand and drew forth two small seals. No sooner had he inspected them, then recognizing the royal signets, his cheek turned pale and his hand trembled as he replaced them in their original position, and then returning the cap where he had found it, he remained transfixed with surprise, and uncertain what to do. This customer happened to be a journeyman to the Shah's principal cap maker, who having only a few days before been at work upon this very cap, knowing that it was intended for the royal head, at once, recognized his own stitches and fashion. The conclusion to which he came, particularly when he had seen the seals, was that the person to

whom it belonged, could be no other than the Shah himself.

He had never seen the King, although he was aware that he frequently perambulated the city in disguise, and the more he gazed and cogitated, the more he became convinced that the person before him was that august personage.

He soon communicated the discovery he had made to another customer newly arrived, who having caught the awe inspiring contagion, was not slow in informing the passers by in the street, that the Shah himself was then in the shop, and actually having his head shaved. The commotion produced by this circumstance, in so remote a quarter of the city, may be better imagined than described, for although it was esteemed dangerous for a subject to recognize his King when supposed to be incognito, still, in this instance, it was impossible to restrain peeping, sly looks and lingerings at the corner of the streets.

When Chacal arose from under the hands of the barber, to his surprise, on turning round, he discovered several men standing before him,

with every appearance in their looks and comportment of paying him the most unbounded respect.

He no sooner proceeded to regain possession of his cap, than the journeyman presented it to him with every demonstration of the greatest deference, making becoming prostrations and using appropriate expressions,

“What has happened?” said Chacal, “are beads cheap that our’s is to be laughed at?”

“We are the slaves of the asylum of the world,” said one.

“Whose dogs are we,” said another, “that should dare to stand before a King of Kings, the refuge of nations?”

“Are ye mad, oh men!” said Chacal, not having seized their meaning, “are ye mad, and has wind entered your brain. Who am I that should thus be addressed? My father and mother were honest folks, and I, unworthy that I am, am their progeny—what means then refuge of nations and King of Kings?”

During this speech, the cap maker’s journeyman had whispered to the barber, that he whom

he had just shaved was the Shah, and confirmed his words by the proof he had discovered.

Upon which the barber fairly prostrated himself before Chacal, and said :

“ See the fortunate hour during which the dwelling of your slave has been thus visited ! Praises be to Allah, the stars are true, whatever we poor mortals may say, there is no denying their influence. They have led the footsteps of our King of Kings into my humble dwelling, and have guided this too fortunate hand over the august surface of his imperial head !—Forgive the faults and imperfections of your slave.”

Chacal, during this speech began to gain an insight into his new position, but still he professed ignorance.

“ Wherefore, oh men !” said he, “ do ye speak to me thus ? Cannot a man sit down and be shaved without being called King of Kings—is he to be lauded for nothing, and to be revered for that which he does not possess ? Speak, oh men, and tell me wherefore is this ?”

“How,” said the journeyman, “has not your slave seen the imperial seals within the lining of that cap, which his own unworthy hands has helped to fashion and make. ’Tis by that we knew that none but our King of Kings could enjoy possession of such seals; and, therefore, that you, oh Shah, can be none other than our sovereign, and we your humblest of servants.”

At hearing these words, Chacal immediately applied his hand into the lining of his cap, and there, indeed, he found the seals.

We must here pause awhile, to explain who and what was the man we have called Chacal Bey.

He was born on the borders of the lake of Van, in the village of Maug, the inhabitants of which are composed almost entirely of families producing Magi or Magicians, and at an early age he was taught many of the secrets of the black art, by which means he could hold converse with demons, and acquired considerable familiarity with jins and other unearthly beings. He had learnt the science of divining by the Koran, of casting fate by dice, of explaining dreams from the cabalis-

tical book, and of taking up serpents without fear of harm. He had, moreover, been inducted into the profound mystery of vivifying a dead body, throwing his own life into it, and leaving his own body dead in its place, and only longed for an opportunity of trying a still greater feat, that of exchanging faces with another, without losing the individuality of either. Thus instructed and educated, he left his country a professed magician. In his dress and appearance, he did not differ from the other inhabitants of Roum, excepting in the sheep-skin cap, for his object was to keep his profession a secret, and it was only when the opportunity offered, he asserted his character and practiced his art for the furtherance of his views of obtaining money, of which he was greedy. He made the experiment of exchanging faces with his own father, in which he succeeded so well, that he longed to have an opportunity to repeat it in some more profitable manner. On that occasion it is recorded, that having secured his father in his own image, he himself having become his father, he inflicted upon him so

sound a beating, that he was, the wonder of all magicians.

When he beheld the royal signets, holding them as he did in his hand, his mind was suddenly struck by the thought of the immense advantage which he might derive from this discovery.

The seal of Soloman, he knew was the great talisman which ensured to the possessor the obedience and agency of many supernatural beings, and he also knew that the seals of Kings partook of the nature of that great talisman. What then was his emotion when he found himself in actual possession of two royal seals, instruments of such unbounded importance, that he was not long in making up his mind what to do. Eyeing the barber, the journeyman and the others who were assembled in the shop, he adopted a cast of features, and assumed manners which would confirm them in their suspicions that he was the King, when, at the same time, placing the cap on his head and inserting the seals into his bosom, he stalked out of the shop, saying,

“ When the Shah is in disguise let no one

notice him ; he goes upon the business of Allah and the state, let him depart in peace."

So saying, he immediately quitted that part of the town, walked forward, and having bought a sheet of paper, ink and a drinking cup, he proceeded without the city to a pool of clear water, on the borders of which he seated himself. Here he produced the seals, and having made an impression of them on various parts of the paper by the means of water, he washed them off into his drinking cup, then uttering certain mysterious words of belief, and using a form of invocation proper to the occasion, he drank off the contents of the cup.

Having done this, he felt a strange sensation come over his face, jerking his nose, blinking his eyes, contracting his lips and lengthening his chin and beard, by which he understood that the transformation which he desired was perfected.

He straightway bent himself over the water to inspect his face, when strange to say, instead of himself, he saw one whom he knew must be the Shah being the same he had seen in the bath.

At this sight, he broke out into coarse ejacula-

tions of delight, and without delay bent his steps towards the city. Having entered the gates, he perceived that the guard stationed there, the door-keepers and the officers, eyed him with a certain look of submission and awe, which told him that he was recognized as the Shah, and when he made his way through the streets and bazaars, he every now and then caught the expression of an eye, which indicated humility and apprehension.

Having entered the palace itself, there he was recognized at once, and there, indeed, his troubles began, for how was he to adapt his ignorance to the forms and manner of life of a Shah? He was coarse in his nature, having passed a rude unsettled existence among wild and uncivilized people, and he felt that in undertaking to personify a King, he must make so many mistakes, that in the end they would not fail to create suspicion as to his identity. He found that he was wrong in entering the palace by the principal gate and recollecting himself to be in disguise, he retraced his steps, and after some search, having found the private

entrance which he made no doubt the Shah was wont to adopt on such like excursions, he entered therein.

The doubt which most perplexed him was, whether the King had returned to his palace immediately after the earthquake, or whether he was still absent; but when he found that he had himself obtained precedence, a fact which he ascertained by the prostrations of those who received him at the palace gate, he then became more easy in his mind.

He knew that his face only was changed, his person remaining the same; this was an imperfection in his art which he could not remedy, but wearing as he did the clothes of the Shah, he flattered himself that no remarks on that head could be elicited at present. He perceived by the actions and demeanour of the palace attendants, that when he had got within the private entrance, his incognito ceased, for every one was then on the alert to wait upon him.

The true Shah evidently was expected and anxiety prevailed as to his safety after the occurrence of the earthquake, consequently

when Chacal appeared, universal joy manifested itself. He was conscious that his voice was not changed, and that circumstance made him slow to speak, he, therefore, proceeded in silence, following the footsteps of two under heralds who walked before him and led the way to his own apartment.

As soon as he entered the precincts of the harem, whither it was the custom for the Shah to proceed on returning from an excursion in disguise, the heralds cried with a loud voice.

“ *Shah geldi !* the King is come.”

When they had left him, he was received by the chief of the eunuchs and a band of women, who made a lane for him to pass through, putting forth their best looks to receive the favour of a glance from the royal eye.

Accustomed as they had been to the kind and winning manners of the real King, who always spoke with condescension and affability to every one on his path, they were utterly surprised and awe struck, when they remarked, that on this occasion, he walked by without saying a word, and without even a sign

of recognition to those whom before he never failed to notice. When, at length, he entered his own private room, it was whispered throughout the courts of the palace. "The King is out of humour," and straightway every one was set a thinking.

"What has happened? what news is this? ah, it is the earthquake—damage has been done—poor wretches are ruined—perhaps some have been killed."

These and such like words and speculations were made and expressed; so that a general gloom pervaded the harem, and the hearts of the women and slaves.

Chacal having seated himself, was immediately attended by the head valet, who disrobed him, taking off his dusty garments to his very shirt, and then called in a second man, who forthwith, his arms bare and his skirts girded, approached him, kneaded him all over, rubbed his arms, back, legs and feet, and so entirely took possession of his person, that Chacal could scarcely stir hand or foot.

In this manner was the Shah pleased to be

operated upon, after he had undergone the fatigue of a long perambulation throughout the city, and thus did the operator act, supposing that he was practising upon his real master. He was the King's chief barber and shampooer, his office being to keep the person of his royal master in repair. Inspecting every decay and reporting upon every imperfection, he was surprized whilst he rubbed the head and the nape of the neck, to observe that the right ear possessed a slit which had never before come under his inspection. He paused and looked and looked again. He was in doubt whether to make known his discovery, not willing to speak unless spoken to, when no longer master of himself, and trusting to the known beneficence of his royal master, he exclaimed :

“ As your slave is the sacrifice of the asylum of the world—here is a slit !” and at same time touched his ear.

Chacal began to burn like a piece of live coal, so overcome was he by this unwelcome piece of intelligence ; he said nothing, but restricted himself to trying his voice in a

growl, which so startled the barber, that he fairly jumped on one side from apprehension.

Looking into Chacal's face, he discovered him, indeed, to be the Shah, a fact which he began to doubt, when without saying more, though he pondered much, he completed his task and took his leave in all haste.

As soon as he left the palace, he whispered to his acquaintance the observations he had made—that the King's ear had been slit since last he shampooed him, and that his voice was changed since the earthquake, assertions which caused every one to exclaim, “Ajaib, wonderful !”

Chacal having clothed himself from head to foot in royal apparel, the evening meal was then served up in the customary state, by the servants appointed to that office. In so doing, they could not fail to remark that there was something very strange in the whole manner and demeanour of the King—he said nothing—he gazed like one who saw matters of state for the first time—he eyed every thing and every one with curiosity—whatever he did, was full of awkwardness, more

partaking of the manners of a man of the woods, than those of a courtier. After having seized upon the food before him with an avidity and a coarseness of demeanour, unequalled by mule drivers, and having gorged himself to surfeiting, he perfectly electrified his servants, by, at length, uttering one word, and that word was *Shirab*, wine. Now Mobarek Shah, besides being the most polished and urbane prince in the east, was also one of the most pious, one who adhered so scrupulously to the ordinances of the prophet, that he would rather have cut off his hand, than allowed it to be the bearer of the proscribed liquor to his lips. How much the attendants who now heard the order for wine were astonished, it is easier to imagine than to describe — they stood with their mouths open, and their eyes staring, looking at each other, and then at their supposed master, until another order, louder and more affirmative to the same effect, issued from Chacal, which made them flee with apprehension. In an instant, the news rang throughout the palace and the harem, that the Shah

wanted "wine"—men lifted up their hands in astonishment, women giggled and whispered, and exclaimed—every one was in a state of bewilderment, and many began to hint that the Shah had run mad and wanted wine, all in consequence of the earthquake. No other excuse could be alleged than the earthquake,—that event accounted for all—the slit in the ear, the silence, the voracity and grossness, and last of all, the call for wine, every thing was accounted for by the earthquake.

Wine having been procured, it was presented with all proper decorum, by the lord steward, to the supposed Shah, who very soon suited the action to the word, and drank thereof, at one draught, more than had been known to exist within the walls of the palace during the whole reign. Refreshed, invigorated and excited by this act, Chacal acquired courage in his new position, and began to think that he might now safely give his fears to the wind, and enjoy himself with the good things by which he was surrounded.

It was a custom with Mobarek Shah after having partaken of his evening's meal, for the

head eunuch to make his appearance, and inquire which of his Majesty's wives or slaves, it was his pleasure should attend him in order to enliven him by her talents for music, or by her conversation; and for a long time back the answer had invariably been, the Lady Khoshboo. Now the Lady Khoshboo was a princess of the greatest beauty, of much wit and most refined manners, who had so captivated the monarch by her charms, that he was scarcely ever happy out of her company. She had long been the favourite wife—he loved her with a sincere and ardent passion, which was as sincerely and ardently returned, for the sentiments of Khoshboo towards Mobarek were so pure and disinterested, that their loves might have been made the subject of a poem, as fairly as those of the celebrated Leileh and Majnun, or of Ferhad and Shireen. She, be it said, being conscious of her power, and secure in the affections of her lord and master, would not listen to the reports spread concerning him, on the occasion here described, but smiling in her contempt at the falsehood, was only waiting

for the moment when she should be called, as usual, into the presence.

When the head eunuch appeared before Chacal, and bowing low, asked him the question,

“Which of the slaves of your Majesty’s household, does the asylum of the universe command should be brought before the august presence?”

What was the surprise, the astonishment, the horror of the formal man of women, to hear these words, “The fattest !” Fixed to the earth, like one in a fit, the bewildered man stirred neither hand nor foot, uncertain whether he had heard right or not.

“The fattest,” he exclaimed, with a tremulous voice, “did your Majesty say?”

“The fattest,” again exclaimed Chacal, in a voice of thunder ; “go bring the fattest—what more do you require, dog? am I not the King?”

The awe-struck eunuch disappeared with singular haste, quaking from head to foot, and convinced that his royal master had been struck by some fatal malady of the brain.

“As Allah is great,” said he retiring, “the

earthquake cannot have done this also! He cannot want a fat slave, because the ground has shaken—or has it, perhaps, shaken all sense from his head.”

However, he went his way, and when every one expected that the Lady Khoshboo would, as usual, proceed to pay her evening visit, and when she herself arrayed in her most fascinating attire, was already making her way to the royal presence, what was her surprise and dismay, and the surprise and wonderment of all, when the head eunuch announced that the fattest of the slaves was ordered to attend! The fall of a thunderbolt could not have excited more sensation. The fattest! the fattest! was echoed about from mouth to mouth, from one end of the harem to the other. Surprise was in every accent, marvel and excitement in every look. Now who was the fattest, was a question not so easy to decide. All the women were ordered to attend, and as they appeared and were arranged in a row for inspection, such laughing and giggling, such animation and tumult had never been known in a Cashgar harem, since the commencement of the

dynasty. All the fat women compared themselves one with the other.

“I am fatter than you,” said one.

“You are not.”

“I am,” said another.

“See here my fat,” said a fourth.

“See mine.”

“Look how round I am here.”

“I am rounder,” continued others, *Dilpez* compared herself to *Ferbehgil*—*Shishmanloo* to *Ajebghoraz*, and *Poorshekm* to *Chokchey*. And loud and fierce were the discussions, each one seeking to be the favourite, until *Badboo*, a middle aged slave, one who had no pretensions to charms, and who really possessed no attraction beyond preponderating obesity, was ordered to stand forth, and she after having been measured, weighed and commented upon, was pronounced by acclamation to be the fattest. Having been dressed, washed, and ornamented, she was straightway led to the Shah, and amid the jeers, the sneers, and the astonishment of the whole harem, was paraded to the royal apartment, introduced, and there left.

We must now turn to where Mobarek Shah, having fled from the interior of the bath on the shock of the earthquake, was standing in his bathing clothes in the middle of the street, awaiting, with many others, the result of the catastrophe. No one recognized him in this guise, and he now felt half inclined to acknowledge himself to be the Shah, in order that he might, by his authority, bestow help to those of his subjects, who perchance had suffered by the event. However, as nothing in the immediate neighbourhood of the bath had taken place requiring his aid, after a sufficient interval had elapsed, he retired to take possession of his clothes, anxious to explore what of ruin or disaster might have occurred in the city.

In the confusion which ensued in the bath, in vain he sought for his own apparel—neither cap, nor vest, nor shawl, nor trousers, nor cloak could be found, and after a fruitless search, he was obliged to put up, greatly to his disgust, with the much worn, and little attractive garments, left by Chacal Beg. Never had he before adopted so

entire a disguise ; but as he intended that the penance he was about to endure in these clothes should last but a little while, he abstained from recurring to those expedients, for procuring better, which it is obvious he might have adopted. He sallied forth, and bent his way through the great thoroughfares, loitering about with the intention of redressing any wrong which he might perceive, or bestowing his assistance, wherever it might be required. Just as he was turning from one street into another, where the cupola of a great caravanserai had fallen in, suddenly he felt an odd sensation in the face—a twitching of the nose—a jerking of the eyes, and an enlargement of the lips, for which he could not account, and which must have taken place, exactly at the same moment when a similar metamorphosis took place in Chacal. He paused to consider whence such sensations could arise, but excited by the desire of being useful, and anxious to proceed to the spot where the disaster had occurred, he merely passed his hand over his face, and finding all his features in their right places, hastened on-

wards to the fallen caravanserai. Having reached the scene of action, he discovered that the report was not exaggerated—destruction had overtaken the company of merchants there assembled ; a great portion of their goods were buried in the ruins, and fears entertained that some of their owners were buried with them. Mobarek immediately advanced into the very centre of the confusion, and made himself conspicuous by his exertions in extracting bales, trunks, and packages from the fallen materials. Some of the merchants seeing a suspicious looking person, meanly dressed, and distinguished in no manner from the crowd, excepting by a very unprepossessing appearance, began to inquire who he was, and why he was laying hands upon property not his own, and when they found him still persevering, they thought it high time to defend such an invasion of their property. Mobarek on the other hand, finding that the exertions of the lookers on were not sufficiently vigorous, loudly made remonstrances in words denoting authority, and issued his orders with all the self-confidence produced by high situation.

“Who is this brawler,” said a merchant standing by, “what dirt is he eating? Whence comes he?”

“O little man,” cried out another addressing himself to Mobarek, “are you turned mad all of a sudden, or is your brain perchance buried in the desolation?”

“Hold your peace,” exclaimed Mobarek, “give us more work and less words; who knows whether some unfortunate soul may not be buried in the ruins!”

“And if he is,” said the Daroga or police magistrate who stepped up at the same time, “is it your duty to seek him, little man and great donkey!”

When Mobarek perceived his own officer, and heard himself addressed in such like language, he thought it his duty to throw off his disguise, and advancing towards him, whilst he seized him by the beard, exclaimed, “Dog! what words are these? Do you not see and recognize your King?”

The Daroga first inspecting his face, then casting his eyes over his person, burst into a fit of laughter and exclaimed, “King, indeed!

Mashallah ! the earthquake has shaken men's wits out of their places as well as the cupolas of caravanserais. If you, a poor fakir are a King, what must I be who am a Daroga ? Go, go, go be mad some where else, but let these honest folks find their own goods, and bury their own dead."

Mobarek who was in truth the mildest of princes, on hearing these words, grew red with rage, and began to expostulate and beat about him with fury. " Seize the villain," said he to the surrounding crowd, " I who am the Shah, am I to be bearded in this manner by my own slave ?"

Upon these words being spoken, a loud and taunting shout was heard to issue from the crowd, the loudest and most excited of the shouters being the Daroga himself. " Madman ! madman !" was echoed from mouth to mouth ; " here is a burnt father of a Turk who calls himself our King ; away with him, strike his mouth, beat him with stripes, away with him."

Mobarek hearing these words, seeing that his

interference only excited fresh tumult, and conceiving the earthquake had turned the heads of his subjects, slowly walked away with rage in his heart and astonishment in his mind. "I will soon set this matter to rights," said he to himself as he bent his steps towards his own palace, "if the people will revile their Shah and refuse his help when he offers it, they must stand by the consequences, and that wretch of a Daroga too! his father must be sent to burn; of that there is no doubt."

Upon this, entering the private gate of his palace, he was making his way to the interior courts, when he was suddenly stopped by the door-keeper, who exclaimed, "dog's father, and mother's whelp, whither go ye? are you for making a kennel of a king's palace?"

"As Allah is great," exclaimed Mobarek, "there must be some devilry in this." Then turning to the door-keeper, he said with emphasis and deliberation, "now, little man, as you love your soul, look me well in the face and tell me who am I?"

"Who are you?" said the door-keeper, "what words are these? am I, the Shah's

door-keeper, to be called upon by every son of a burnt father to tell him, who are the unclean parents that begat him? What care I who they are? But," said he, looking at him straight in the face, "for this once I will tell you, that you are an ugly dog, a dog that eats much dirt, and a dog that will get kicked out if he walks two steps further."

"Mashallah!" exclaimed the King with a smile, "I can't be worse off than this, I am kicked out of my own house at my own door, and by my own servant! Satan has entered Cashgar with the earthquake, and all my subjects are running mad as fast as they can! I'll address you once more," said the Shah to the door-keeper, "and should you then not hearken unto my words, may Allah have mercy upon you, for I will not. Tell me, madman, do you know your King when you see him?"

"Madman yourself," said the officer; "do I know him? did he not enter this gate an hour ago, and is he not now within the harem—what words are these?"

"Now I know that you must have lost your wits or your eye sight," said Mobarek, "for who is your King but I?"

“ See, see,” said the door-keeper, pointing his finger in derision, “ here is a dog without a saint, who calls himself King — here, children !” he cried with a loud voice to some attendant ferashes, “ here bring sticks and turn this fellow out. Let us not strike his head off, for our master and lord the King is a forgiving monarch, and will not see men hurt ; but let us teach him that beards are not to be laughed at in Cashgar, and that there is beating to be had here, as well as in other places which acknowledge the true faith.”

Upon this there was a charge made by the ferashes, headed by the door-keeper against the unfortunate Mobarek, who seeing himself attacked, thought it prudent to retreat, in order that he might have leisure to reflect what line of conduct to pursue in this posture of his affairs. Upon consideration he came to the conclusion either that the evil eye had struck the whole of the inhabitants of Cashgar at one and the same time, when the city was visited by the earthquake, or that he himself was under the influence of sorcery. All those who had seen him, and who ought to have known his person, rejected him as one totally unknown ; he

was, therefore, anxious to ascertain how the change could have been produced.

Perambulating the street, he met a reverend man, a priest, one whom he supposed would not deceive a stranger, and him he accosted. "Peace attend you, Sir priest," said Mobarek, "as you cherish your beard and reflect on the years gone bye of which it is the representative, I conjure you to look into my face and tell me what sort of a face it is, and if you will be so kind, make me out a catalogue of all my features."

The priest was not a little astonished by this address, but extraordinary events having lately taken place in Cashgar, he thought he might as well add this one to the list. "Upon my head be it," said he, "whatever may be your motive, I am not a man to cheat you out of your humour. Therefore, in the first place, I must tell you that your nose is short and crusty."

"How is that?" said Mobarek, with a start, "it was always aquiline and handsome."

"Then your eyes are small and green."

"They were always large and black before!" exclaimed the King.

“Your forehead is low, your cheeks high, your chin long, and in one word you are so ugly, that dogs have the advantage of you.”

“O wonder, wonder!” exclaimed Mobarek, “here am I, who have always been compared to the moon, and even surpassed the sun in beauty, become less than a dog! Here has been sorcery at work, and I am its victim! Thank you, sir,” he said to the priest, “for the trouble I have occasioned, but, perhaps, you will be able to tell me where the best magician lives in Cashgar, in order that I may go seek his advice on this distressing occasion.

“I only know of one,” said the priest, “and he is a barber, who lives hard by; he has some reputation as a magician, much as an astrologer, and more as a barber.” Upon which, describing the house in which this man was to be found, the reverend man pursued his road.

Mobarek without delay bent his steps towards the barber’s house, who by a strange coincidence happened to be the very same person who had been visited by Chacal on that very same morning. Having found the shop with

ease, for it was well known in the neighbourhood, without hesitation he walked in! "Peace be with you," said Mobarek, eyeing the barber with much interest.

"Peace return to you," answered the other as he gazed upon the face of his customer, and recognising at once the same features he had seen at the beginning of the day. "Mashallah! Heaven be praised—heaven be praised!" he repeated various times, in accents of most profound respect. "The stars have been kind to your humblest of slaves. This has been a great day, an auspicious day! We have not lived for nothing. When an unworthy hand touches the head of a King, it ennobles the whole body. How can your less than the least sufficiently kiss the prints of your imperial slippers, for twice thus honouring his most abject of thresholds!"

"What words are these?" said Mobarek; "have you seen me before? have the stars anything to do with my comings and goings? Can you say who I am?"

"Is your humble slave then so miserable," said the barber, "that the asylum of the

world should so soon have forgotten the events of the morning? Perhaps your Majesty may wish to remain unknown in this second disguise, if so, let the imperial heart forgive the too excessive exultation of his slave, at such unlooked for distinction."

"We understand not your words," said Mobarek, "if you know who I am, tell me so at once, for I very much want to know myself—tell me, who am I?"

"Who?" said the barber with ecstasy, "who? as Allah is in heaven, who but our Shah, our lord and master, our shadow of Allah upon earth, our centre of the universe, our asylum of the world, in short our descendant of Jem and Jah!"

And suiting the action to the word, the devoted barber bowed himself to the ground, and seizing the skirts of Mobarek's cloak, straightway carried it with eagerness to his lips.

"Thanks be to God," said the enraptured Mobarek raising the palms of his hands to the sky, "thanks and praise, that I really am what I have been, and that I am not somebody else—that I have found one who

knows me, and that it is not I who am mad but my subjects."

Then turning to Teeztrash, (for that was his name) he said :

" Oh happy and well constituted barber ! you have uttered words which I have been longing to hear : you have acknowledged what has been this day denied—you have spoken the truth, and raised your Shah from the depths of disgrace and infamy to his lawful throne. I am the King—I was born a King of the line of Jenghiz—and so, as I hope to live, so let me die. But there have been fatal agencies at work in this my city of Cashgar, and to the earthquake has succeeded a blindness or an obstinate obliquity of vision in some of my subjects, which has driven me to and fro, and hearing of you as one learned in the actions of the stars and in supernatural events, I have come to enquire whence do such events proceed, and how we may restore our subjects to their right senses."

" Great words are these that you have spoken, oh King," said the barber in astonish-

ment and trepidation, for in truth there was something in the appearance of the personage who now stood before him, that did not answer to the man who had visited him in the morning—the voice was different—the manner was different—still the face was the same.

“Great words are these!” said he; “this world is a strange world and daily producing new miracles, though no one sees how they are performed. There are agencies of which we poor blind mortals know nothing. Changes are constantly taking place, though we cannot perceive them; in some immediate, in others slow and imperceptible. See, hair changes from black to white in an hour, eye in a minute, how is this? then wherefore should faces not change also? Behold the fat men of the world, how they replete and deplete—behold the thin, how they first run to skin and then to bone—remark the beards and skulls of humanity—they undergo continual alteration. I shave a head one day and make it as white and smooth as Al-bors, it comes back to me in a week, black and rugged as the pine forest of Thibet. And

let not your slave speak without proof and with presumption, for see that sacred head of your Majesty which I this morning shaved, will ere to-morrow's eve be covered with a fresh tint and again be ready for my razor."

"How is this?" said Mobarek, "you shaved my head this morning! perhaps, you too have been touched by the earthquake!"

"As I live, and as these eyes now view the blessed person of the King of Kings, I swear," said the barber, "that I shaved you this morning."

"Behold," said the Shah, taking off his cap "see and acknowledge your own lie, this head has not been shaved these three days, I was about submitting to the razor in the bath, when the concussion prevented me."

"Allah! Allah! there is but one Allah!" exclaimed Teeztrash, as he inspected Mobarek's head, which was black with a three days growth of hair. "When will miracles cease? sense has dropped from my brain and I have emptied my heart through fear—this is a change! this is more than I ever expected notwithstanding—

ing what I have just said—but stay !” exclaimed the barber with a still louder burst of surprise, inspecting Mobarek’s right ear, “ this very morning, and here I swear upon the beard of the blessed prophet,” taking the ear into his hand, “ this auspicious ear was slit and now it is whole. Speak, oh Shah, how is this ?”

“ There must be sorcery here,” said Mobarek in deep thought, “ bring me a mirror, as I live there must be sorcery here.”

The barber immediately producing his mirror presented it to the King, who straightway took it in hand, and no sooner had he inspected his face, than he made an exclamation of horror and almost fainted away.

“ *Amán ! Amán !* pity ! oh pity !” he exclaimed, “ I am dying—I am dead—I am not myself—I am somebody else. My kingdom is gone with my face, and an usurper has stolen both.”

Upon hearing these words, and seeing the state into which the unfortunate Mobarek was thrown, the barber approached, and using words of consolation, entreated him

to calm himself, and regain possession of his mind by taking a cool retrospect of the past.

After Mobarek had remained silent for some time, and feeling strong enough to take another survey of his face, he raised the mirror and gazed at himself with mute horror.

“This horrid face is not new to me,” said he in deep cogitation, “I have seen it before, and that not long since.”

He thought and pondered for awhile, when suddenly struck by conviction he exclaimed:

“I have found it, I have it. The face is the face of a stranger who came into the bath when I was reposing—I eyed him between awake and asleep, and I recollect shutting quick my eyes to prevent them from resting upon so disagreeable an object. I see it all—whoever he be, he has stolen my face, of that there is no doubt. That man must be a magician.”

“Have patience,” said Teeztrash; “let us slowly ponder over things—whose clothes are those which now you wear?”

“What do I know?” said Mobarek, “after the earthquake, in the scramble finding that mine were gone, I helped myself to the first that I could find.”

“What was the nature and quality of those you lost?” said the barber.

“I was disguised in the dress of a merchant,” said the King, “I wore a vest, crossed over the breast, a white sash, a dark coloured cloak and a common black cap.”

“By my soul and by your death,” said the barber, “those were the very clothes of the man I shaved this morning. Had you anything about your person,” enquired the barber.

“Yes,” said the Shah, “my purse, and I believe my seals in my secret pocket—no, no, now I recollect,” added he, “I wore them in my cap for better security, for the caba had no side pocket.”

“Then as Allah is great,” said the barber, “you have been acted upon by a sorcerer, he must be famous, and much to be dreaded, for he evidently possesses the awful and fearful secret of the *Terkrooi Bazi*. Let the Shah,

for such you are 'tis plain, let him reflect on what has taken place, and then exercise his reason and judgment upon the best course to pursue. This morning your slave was accosted by a man with a face such as you now possess, dressed in the manner you have described, who having taken off his cap, deposited it in yonder corner, and then sat down to have his head shaved. Fate so ordained that a journeyman cap-maker who had been operated upon, took a seat near the cap. He recognised it as one which his own hands had fashioned only the day before, and knowing it to belong to the Shah, immediately concluded that he who was then under my hands must be His Majesty in disguise. His suspicion was confirmed when he found two royal seals contained within the lining, and forthwith he communicated the intelligence to others, and finally to me. We were satisfied that my customer was the Shah, because although he at first denied the fact, yet as soon as he saw the seals, his whole manner acquired a new tone, and seizing upon them with avidity, he im-

mediately quitted the shop, leaving us convinced of the truth of our discovery."

When the barber had ceased speaking, Mobarek casting himself down in apparent despair, said, "What is now to be done? An usurper has possessed himself of my throne by magic, and by magic he must be dispossessed." Then turning towards the barber, he said, "tell me, O man, what is to be done! Can your art divine where that secret is to be acquired, which having caused me to be deposed from my kingdom, will enable me to regain possession of it?"

Teeztrash with all humility bowed himself before Mobarek, for he felt perfect conviction that he was the Shah, and after some thought, said, "Man is not placed in this world, be he King, or be he subject to eat the bread of unmixed prosperity—that is reserved for hereafter—reverses are his trials, and by his conduct under such trials will he be judged. 'Tis plain, O King, that Allah has designed you for future beatitude, since he has ordained this mode of trying your faith. 'Tis your duty to regain your kingdom, and

you will have to undergo every sort of trouble, fatigue, and privation in the attempt, and Inshallah! you will succeed at last, for fraud so palpable as this will sooner or later be detected."

Mobarek, horrified at wearing a face not his own, and impatient for a magician as ever sick man felt for a doctor, was relieved when the barber had delivered himself of his moral effusion, and then with great earnestness enquired again, "What is to be done? Whither can I go? What can I do to get rid of this awful disaster? Are there not wise men enough in Cashgar to overcome a rascal?"

"In a far distant country, O King!" said Teeztrash, "on the borders of a great lake, in the dominions of the great Blooddrinker, where sects of all denomination, infidels, jews, worshippers of images, and all abominations are allowed to herd and congregate, exists a small community of *Shaitan perests* or worshippers of Satan. The sons of this abominable race are magicians, sorcerers, necromancers—they believe in every species of

witchcraft, and practice numerous wicked incantations—they subsist by making philters, charms, spells, and talismans, and then spread themselves over the world to poison the minds of the credulous, and deceive the ignorant and unwary. Should one of those wretches have travelled hitherwards, we must put our trust in Allah, and as he, it seems, possesses power sufficient to dispossess our King of his throne, it is plain, that for wise purposes the Shaitan has been allowed to reign triumphant for a while, and will only be expelled when the people of Cashgar being convinced of their impurities and abominations, shall reform, and becoming wise and virtuous, will make their city too disagreeable a place of residence for him. As for you, O King,” continued Teeztrash, “your slave only sees one course to pursue, which is to bow your head unto the dust before the decrees of Allah, and in token of your resignation to make a vow and a pilgrimage.”

“How?” said Mobarek, “are you a priest and a man of God that should ordain vows and recommend pilgrimages?”

“Your slave is less than the least,” said the barber; “he has read books, has studied his modicum of astrology, and has conversed with wise men who know things. There is nothing like a vow when the mind is in distress, and no act more wholesome both for soul and body than a pilgrimage. The one secures an object of hope, and the other whilst it keeps that hope alive, also allays irritation of body and mind, giving to both something to do. Despise not wisdom because it comes from a barber. Water is still water, though it springs from mud and slime.”

The dejected Mobarek heard the words of Tecztrash with feelings similar to those of one who hears his death warrant pronounced. The pilgrimage which he was advised to undertake was to the tomb of Nouh al Nebi, the first and elder of all the prophets, which was said to exist at the foot of the mountains of Ararat, in the neighbourhood of which was situated the country of the *Shaitan perests* or devil worshippers. Thus uniting a religious motive to an act of necessity, the barber insisted that success would not fail to crown his

enterprize, and he dwelt the more upon this, because viewing the question in every possible light, he did not see how the difficulty could be otherwise encountered. The face is that which distinguishes one man from another; no other part of the body possesses expression; the voice, the colour of the hair, and the complexion may change, but no features were ever so much altered as to make one face pass for another! In vain might it be proclaimed from every house top in Cashgar, that a sorcerer had stolen the King's face, adopting its sacred features for his own, no one would believe such a thing possible, although those who like the barber, were conversant in magic, and had witnessed the progress of this particular transaction might be convinced of the truth. That there was a remedy to the evil was certain, for what had been done once may be done a second time, in accordance to that saying of a famous Tartar sage, that "one good *turn* deserves another."

Mobarek, however, was slow in adopting the barber's scheme, for one predominant feeling existed in his heart which paralyzed

his energies, and rendered him a prey to the greatest infirmity of purpose. That feeling was his love for the Princess Khoshboo. Accustomed as he was to the enjoyment of her society, his existence being united to hers, the prospect of a separation, perhaps for ever, distracted his heart with grief. But now impelled by a stronger feeling than the loss of her society, he felt that under cover of his face, the base usurper of his throne might also usurp her affections, and this thought rendered him so miserable, that he was determined, ere he decided what course finally to pursue, to make an attempt to see and undeceive her. Accordingly, being well acquainted with all the avenues and secret entrances of his own palace, as well as with her habits of life, he proposed a scheme by which he hoped to see her alone, at a moment when he knew she might be seated in her room of retirement. Having passed the night at the barber's house, (who exerted himself to the utmost to entertain his royal guest with proper distinction,) the next morning,

before the dawn, he glided into the garden of the harem, through a secret door, and disguised in a woman's veil, contrived to pass unnoticed into the very apartment inhabited by the lady of his affections, and secreted himself in one of the adjacent closets, where we must, for the present, leave him.

When the Princess Khoshboo heard that the slave Badboo had been preferred before her, and called to the presence of the Shah, she retired to her apartment dissolved in tears and a prey to grief and mortification. In vain she recalled to her mind every word that had passed in her last interview with her beloved Mobarek, fearful lest she might have expressed herself in a manner to give offence, she could recollect nothing that could have produced this apparent change in his sentiments. It was as strange as it was grievous. She could not bring herself to believe that one so full of feeling, so tender, so just, as Mobarek should, without any reason, have discarded her, to attach himself to a coarse, uneducated slave. His tastes had been her

tastes, his affections were her affections. They had lived to each other, and although he was the best of masters to those who immediately surrounded his person, as he was the most just of monarchs to his subjects at large, yet how he could associate with those whose tastes were not as refined as his own, and who enjoyed no feeling in common, were circumstances totally inexplicable !

The people of Cashgar were more or less given to superstition, believing in the power of magic, and Khoshboo among the rest was not incredulous ; yet although the whole city were willing to believe that the earthquake had been caused by a stroke of that destiny from which no Mussulman can ever be free, still so infatuated was she in her love for her beloved Mobarek that she would not allow herself to give him up, until she had again seen and heard from his own lips that she was no longer dear to him.

As the day closed in, she found her position becoming more and more irksome, for her slaves who loved her tenderly had so espoused her

cause that they did not cease conveying to her every report that was current in the seraglio of the renewed delinquencies and atrocities of their royal master. In rushed one open mouthed, saying, "As you love your soul, O my Khanum, I swear, that he insists upon more wine. He drinks much wine."

A short time after another ran in exclaiming, "He is calling the Sheik-el-islam a burnt father, and the Mufti a dog without a blessing! Such horrid words he utters, that we are putting our trust in the prophet."

Soon after, more women came with the news that he had given Badboo a slap in the face, and had desired her to go to a disagreeable place. The sum of the whole evening's proceedings amounted to this, that he was left very red in the face, his cap on one side, calling the chief eunuch the father of a donkey, and asserting with constant oaths and protestations that he was a King, and nothing but a King!

The unfortunate Khoshboo was in utter despair at all she heard, and began seriously to consider what such marvels could possibly

mean; she passed the night in a state of sleepless trepidation, giving herself up to unceasing conjecture and to unchecked grief.

“I will see him to-morrow,” she exclaimed to herself, “happen what may, I will force myself into his presence, and ascertain in person from whence can proceed so great, so extravagant a change in his whole conduct. Should he persist in treating me after this manner, as I live, I will leave him and take to the deserts and mountains, and there seek repose either in utter seclusion or in death.”

Having dismissed her attendants, she endeavoured to repose her harassed mind by sleep, but in vain—hour succeeded hour without closing her eyes, until at length the day began to dawn—she arose, and exerting her strength, lifted up the heavy sash that closed the window of her room, and endeavoured to withdraw the exterior curtain, in order to breathe the fresh air of the morning. In so doing, she made a noise, which became a signal for Mobarek who had already taken post in a secret closet to be in readiness.

He knew that the noise proceeded from the

room in which Khoshboo usually slept, he therefore stepped forwards and putting his eye to the crevice formed by the hinges of the door, he there beheld his beloved, seated in a melancholy attitude, her head resting on her hand, with her eyes turning towards heaven, as if in mental prayer. His heart palpitated at this sight, for it was then that he felt the cruelty of possessing a face not his own, and that, the most hideous of its kind. However, he determined, before he showed himself, to try what the sound of his voice, which was unchanged, might produce in his favour, and he, therefore, said in a low accent,

“Khoshboo ! my soul Khoshboo !”

At these words, which fell upon the ears of the disconsolate princess, like the morning dew upon an opening flower, Khoshboo started—her colour left her cheek—she listened again and said,

“Mobarek, my lord, is that your voice?”

“Yes, it is me, my princess,” he replied, “my soul is thirsty for want of thy charms.”

Hearing this, she quickly arose from her seat, and with one bound, her heart the while

beating violently, and her eyes flashing joy, she flew to the door, and raising the latch pulled it open. Mobarek meanwhile had turned his back to her, fearing, lest the view of his face might defeat his hopes, and said,

“Khoshboo, my love, you must be prepared for a horror—your lover and your husband is a victim to sorcery, and you will no longer recognise him—he is still, however, your own faithful prince in heart, though he be changed in features.”

During these words, Khoshboo had seized Mobarek's hand, clasped his knees, scarcely heeding the tenour of his speech, and was striving to obtain a more tender embrace, when as he turned his face towards her, she caught a view of it—words cannot describe the revulsion that took place in her breast at the sight—she started back, uttered several screams so loud and piercing that they rung throughout all parts of the harem, and then she fell into a swoon.

The sounds of her voice were heard by her women, as well as by some of the eunuchs who were beginning to rise, and immediately a

rush was made to her apartment—woman followed woman, and eunuch succeeded eunuch, when pushing their way into the room, it may be imagined what was their surprise, to find the gem and favourite of the harem apparently lifeless, before a stranger, and that stranger a ruffian. They all fell of course upon the intruder before they thought of the sufferer, for vengeance always takes precedence of pity, and having seized, bound, and dragged him away, they then endeavoured to restore the unfortunate princess to life, an operation of great difficulty, and which having been attended with success, was succeeded by a long fit of illness, with strong symptoms of mental derangement.

The imposter having passed the first evening of his reign in eating and drinking such things as he had never eaten and drank before, finished the day, as may have been gathered from what has been said, by an unquestionable fit of intoxication. The harem, the palace, even the city, were thrown into a state of surprise, and had it not been for the earthquake, people would have concluded that the Shah had run clean out

of his senses. But as we have before observed, that event had prepared men's minds to believe in a supernatural agency, and consequently they concluded that that same agency was acting upon the temper, habits and conduct of the sovereign.

The grand vizier and other dignitaries were anxious to observe how he would comport himself at the next great *selam* or court, which was daily held before the noon-day prayers, because the temper and humour of the Shah being always a matter of considerable public importance, they wished to ascertain whether they might hope for a continuance of the peace and good government which they had hitherto enjoyed, or whether they were to look for a change, perhaps, to be ground under a tyranny or made to groan under the horrors of caprice and uncertainty.

Chacal having shaken off the fumes of his potations, awoke to a sense of the difficulties of his situation. Aware that he was to appear in public, before the court, and the assembled dignitaries, and, moreover, that he would have to undergo various ceremonies,

both in etiquette and forms of speech, of which he was utterly ignorant, he felt loath to exhibit himself. However, being a man of quick apprehension, although coarse and sensual in appetite and habits, he determined to trust in his good destiny, and conform himself to what the chapter of accidents might open to his understanding. When the hour was come, having been duly dressed in gorgeous brocade, and the richest shawls, his arms loaded with armlets and a glittering crown of jewels on his head, he proceeded to walk in state from the apartments of the harem, to take the seat prepared for him, in the great hall of audience. All the women were on foot to see him pass, for so great had been the curiosity excited by his recent conduct, that they flocked to ascertain whether he really was the King Mobarek who reigned over them, or another.

Leaving the gate of the harem, and entering upon the more public avenues, the heralds announced his arrival by the usual loud cries, the signal for the viziers, the secretaries of state, the law officers, the men of the sword,

and all other dignitaries to take their places, according to rank, and there to await in humble expectation, and in attitudes of respect, until the monarch should appear. After the proper delay had elapsed, and the necessary quantum of awe had been excited, the wary, though apprehensive Chacal at length made his appearance. He implicitly followed the lord master of ceremonies, who preceding him, at length conducted him straight to the throne, upon which he took his seat, though with so much awkwardness of manner, accompanied by attitudes and forms so uncouth and ungraceful, that every one could not refrain remarking how much their young and elastic Shah had suddenly altered. Mobarek who united agility with grace in every step, who universally charmed the world by the amiability of his demeanour, and the benevolence of his looks, was, indeed, but ill-represented by the coarse and heavy Chacal, who although he wore a face not to be mistaken, still could not fail exciting a suspicion that all was not as it was wont to be. Having seated himself, the counterfeit King

looked abashed and out of countenance, for he no more knew what to do, or say than an idiot. There he sat looking at his court and his courtiers, whilst they in return gazed at him. Instead of immediately addressing the appointed court flatterer and maker of speeches, according to established etiquette, and receiving an answer which would tell him that he was the star of the universe, by which the rest of the world guided their actions, Chacal uttered not a word. He would have given his beard had any one of the many automaton who stood before him, said something or anything—he would even have received abuse with pleasure, and been thankful for imprecations. But it was as much as their heads were worth to utter a word out of the usual routine, and, therefore, all were silent.

At length by good fortune a great stir took place at the furthest end of the court, and to the surprise of all, to their utter amazement and even fear, the voice of their King was heard to issue, not from the throne, but in loud accents of wrath and complaint, whence the aforesaid stir and noise were heard to proceed.

“What has happened?” at length was uttered from the throne in a voice new to the ears of the assembled court, words spoken by Chacal, and which were immediately answered by the person appointed to speak to the King in public.

The stir was produced by the arrival of the eunuchs and executioner’s officers, who having seized upon Mobarek in the apartment of the wretched Khoshboo, were now dragging him forward to receive judgment from the mouth of the King himself, for the dire offence which he had committed.

During this act of violence, the following words were heard ever and anon vociferated in the voice of Mobarek :

“Dogs and villains stop—whither are you taking me? Am I not your King—do not you recognise my voice?”

Then after much struggling, being dragged into the very presence of Chacal, he exclaimed pointing to the imposter.

“That wretch is a sorcerer, an usurper—he sits on my throne.”

Then calling to his grand vizier by name, he said,

“ Will you allow this, oh man ! I who am your true King, I order you to seize and slay the villain.”

Chacal, who now perceived how matters stood, recognising his own face in that of Mobarek, and who began really to fear that he might be in danger, exercised his voice without disguise, and exclaimed :

“ What madman is this ? wherefore is he brought here—after all am I not the King ? ”

“ Dog and villain,” again exclaimed Mobarek, “ you are a *Shaitan*—a black necromancer—you have usurped my throne as well as my face.”

The whole scene was one of stirring moment, every one present was in a state of alarm. The conflicting parties were eyed with awe and suspicion—no one knew what to believe. The voice of Mobarek was there, but issuing from a face that inspired disgust, whilst his own face was on the throne, but speaking in a manner and with a tone that created apprehension.

Chacal would willingly have ordered the executioners to end the dispute by commanding the instant decapitation of his rival, but he

feared had he done so, to endanger his own existence. He apprehended, should he order Mobarek's death, that the magic which he had exercised would cease, and his own face returning to him, would leave him at the mercy of the people at Cashgar, whose anger and indignation would not fail to be excited ; therefore, with great presence of mind he again lifted up his voice, and said,

“ Stop that madman's voice—strike him on the mouth should he speak again. Now say, oh man,” addressing the chief eunuch, “ what is his crime, and wherefore is he brought hither ?”

“ As I am your sacrifice,” said the guardian of the women, “ this man was found in the apartments of the harem, which is a crime worthy of death, and your slave has brought him before the asylum of the world to receive sentence from his Majesty's sacred lips ; here is the executioner ready at hand.”

In fact, an executioner with one hand on his sword was already prepared to sever the head of the unfortunate Mobarek, for a crime

so perpetrated had ever been followed by death without reprieve, since Cashgar had been a kingdom.

“Put up your sword, oh little man,” exclaimed Chacal, “the wretch is a madman, that is plain, sense has left his brain and he is a stranger to wisdom ; let him live, he knows no better—go, turn him out of the city—give him money and give him food, let him depart and Allah go with him.”

At this extraordinary act of lenity, the court was thrown into utter surprise. All hearts were turned in favour of the counterfeit Shah, who thus taunted, thus abused, his sanctuary invaded and his women insulted, could with readiness forgive—act with mercy and even dismiss his enemy with life, whilst, at the same time, he conferred a benefit.

The unfortunate Mobarek was immediately conducted forth from the presence in a state of hopeless misery and bewilderment, whilst the court flatterer having a theme to expatiate upon, exhausted his wit to laud and magnify the supposed monarch to the very summit of

the seventh heaven, apostrophizing him as the most benign, the most forgiving and generous father of his people that had ever sat upon a despotic throne.

Mobarek seeing that destiny had decided against him, and that his case was desperate, brought to mind the words of Teeztrash, the barber, and bowing his head to the decrees of Allah, allowed himself, without more ado, to be taken to the gate of his own city and thence to be thrust out with contumely, to seek his fortunes in the wide world.

“The barber spoke the truth,” said he with a sigh, “when he asserted that man is not born to enjoy unmixed prosperity, God is great—God is merciful! faith cannot be truly exercised unless it be tried—let me bless the misfortune which gives me an opportunity of exhibiting my belief.”

Then reflecting further, he said,

“I will pursue the path which the sagacious Teeztrash has pointed out—I will make a vow—I will undertake the pilgrimage he prescribed.”

Upon which uttering aloud his profession of faith, and saying, “*Al-Fatihah*,” that prayer

which gives courage and consolation to all true believers, he stepped forward with resolution, never once looking back, lest the recollections of all that he left behind him in his native city should disarm his heart of its resolves and unman his reason.

He would still have lingered on in the hope of one parting interview with his beloved Khoshboo, and would also have once more sought the advice of his now only friend the barber, but he felt that such a step was impossible, seeing that the gates of the city were barred against him; therefore crushing all such thought, he pushed forward with vigour, and pursued his journey towards Samarcand.

Turning aside from the road he came to a village, intending to seek repose for the night, but he little knew the disadvantages of possessing a bad countenance. Upon entering the gate, he was met by a serious looking villager, who eyeing him well from head to foot, exclaimed :

“ Allah have mercy !”

And blowing over each shoulder, fled, and retreated into the heart of the village.

Mobarek, at this ominous overture, paused and considered what could be the meaning of so strange a reception, but in truth he had not long to wait for an explanation, for soon the whole population appeared in a mass, making gestures full of offensive import, accompanied by yells and cries of "Go—Satan be with you, go—Heaven send thee misfortunes, but go—may your eyes be blind, go—curses fall on your house, go."

Upon which Mobarek standing up in self-defence, exclaimed, "What have I done? Am I not a stranger? Am I not a Mussulman?"

"What have you done?" was retorted to him. "What have you not done? Have you not struck us all with the evil eye—Satan that thou art! Has our corn not been blighted? Do asses, and he and she goats die for nothing, and go walking about sick, and without a countenance, for no visible cause? Have our children been dying of the small-pox for nothing? Have the walls of the house you slept in fallen down without a cause? Go—you are a misfortune. We are not men to speak and not to act."

“But as Allah is my witness,” said Mobarek, “I never was here before. I am a man of Cashgar, and never travelled thus far.”

“Father of lies, and great grandfather of deceit!” was roared out by an hundred voices; “have we not eyes, and shall we forget our miseries, because a liar chooses to deny them? Here, look at this maiden who once was beautiful, fresh, happy, see her now. Gone by—a wreck, without a face, without hope, did not your eye spoil her? See this old woman, once fat and merry, what is she now but a skin full of old bones? Are not our women, our kine, our mares, our she camels and she asses all turned barren? Does a tree bear fruit? Does the fountain flow? Do the clouds rain as they did? Can you deny having been here? Go, go”—again was vociferated by an hundred voices, until the unfortunate Mobarek, seeing that all supplication was useless, turned upon his heel and retraced his steps to the high road, shaking the hem of his garment as he walked away, exclaiming, “Allah have mercy

upon you ! infatuated creatures ! none of the dust of your unsainted village shall rest upon my garments."

It was then, more than ever, that he felt the infliction of wearing the face he did, for what could be clearer than that the ruthless Chacal had visited the village and left some token of his satanic art among its inhabitants. "Allah !" he exclaimed, "poor people ! how ready are they to attribute misfortune or disappointment to human intervention rather than to the true cause—all being in a state of probation, as well as myself. The spoiler, although he at present may possess my throne, will also have to endure his trials !"

As he walked on improving the state of his mind by meditation, his heart overflowing with gratitude that he possessed so inestimable a gift, as docility under castigation, and a readiness of belief on matters of high import, he came unawares upon a large caravan which had taken up its position for the night under a grove of trees by the road-side. This occurrence he felt, indeed providential, for he had fully made up his mind to pass the night

unprotected and unrefreshed in the wilds of the open desert. He proceeded to where a tent had been erected, and addressing himself to one, who by the benignity of his countenance, and the respectability of his appearance inspired him with confidence—begged protection for the night, and permission to proceed with the caravan on the following day. For this once, he had fallen into good hands, for the person to whom he addressed himself was one of a company of merchants travelling to Samarcand and Bokhara accompanying their goods for sale. Though the merchant did not approve of Mobarek's looks, still, touched by his voice, and the humility of his manner, and acting upon the obligations of hospitality acknowledged by every good Mussulman, he called him into the tent, invited him to the evening meal, and administered words of comfort to his drooping spirits. Mobarek said little, but opened well his ears to hear all that might be remarked concerning the state of things at Cashgar, from whence the caravan had but recently departed, and it was not long ere his curiosity was gratified. When the company

had washed their hands after eating, and were beginning to smoke, one of the liveliest of the party, a young dealer in lambskins, exclaimed, "Thanks be to Allah, we have left Cashgar at a fortunate moment, and issued from the city at a proper time. Heaven only knows what may be its fate, if matters proceed as they are now going on. 'Tis grievous to sit under a burning sun, when one has been accustomed to repose in the shade."

"In truth, yes," said a more demure merchant, "if the Shah has only been struck by the evil eye, as it is generally asserted, then with proper remedies matters may come round, and he may become the same good monarch he ever was, but should he be the prey of some unsainted enemy of God, and converted from the rectitude of his ways by sorcery or magic, then we must put our trust in Allah. Such things pass man's comprehension."

"It is said," remarked a man of easy credulity, "that the palace at Cashgar begins to be infected with the odour of a goat, and that sounds of falling stones are often heard during

the night.* Strange things are asserted—Heaven knows how true or false they may be, but most certain it is, that matters have greatly changed since the earthquake.”

“*Aman, aman!* pity, pity,” exclaimed a devout man blowing over each shoulder, and shaking the hem of his garment at the same time. “The world is not all as it appears to our eyes. There is a certain curtain interposed before the eye of sense which will be withdrawn by death, and not before. Whatever may really be the case, this is sure, that matters have strangely altered at Cashgar within a short time, and that our King is not the same he was before the catastrophe.”

Some one then said, “It is rumoured that the Princess Khoshboo is so entirely disgusted at the present conduct of the King towards her, that she is determined to leave the court, and retreat to that of her brother the King Kamram.”

* Mahomedan doctors assert that the scape goat, which was sent into the desert for the expiation of the sins of the Jews, was Eblis or Satan. Satan is also called Shaitan Abragim, or the devil stoned, or driven away by stoning, to put every true believer in mind that temptations are to be resisted by force.—Vide D’Herbelot.

At these words, Mobarek pricked up his ears, and ventured to inquire in what direction might be situated the capital city of the King Kamram, and whether it was likely that the caravan would approach it. He was informed that the caravan would proceed precisely in the direction of that city, but that although it would not enter its gates, would halt so near to it, that any one might visit the place with ease.

These were delightful words to the ears of the unfortunate Mobarek, for a new hope immediately sprung up within his breast. He contemplated the possibility of making his deplorable situation known to his brother-in-law, consequently, of procuring through his intervention the power to regain possession of his throne, and once more of being restored to his beloved Khoshboo. He cast about in his mind how to enlist his present companions in his service, and render them subservient to his necessities, but reflecting that he had been rejected by those most interested in recognising him for their lawful sovereign, and how difficult, if not impossible, it would be to make his tale good before entire strangers, he deemed it best to be silent, and to travel on

until he should reach the territory of his brother-in-law, when he would make one great effort to emancipate himself from his present dilemma.

The question he had asked, having however, excited the curiosity of the merchants, one of them inquired whence he came, and whither he was going, to which he answered that he was at present in search of a holy man before whom he proposed to make a vow, and afterwards to follow up that act by performing a pilgrimage to the tomb of the great Nuh el Nebi. He then made a profound inclination of the body, exclaiming with great earnestness, "God is great, there is but one God—whatever is, is, and *Inshallah tallah!*" The seriousness of his demeanour, and the appearance of woe which oppressed him, having excited sympathy in the breast of his auditors, he was informed that in the capital of the King Kamram there lived a famous *merdi Khoda* or man of God, before whom he could make his vow, and who would give him instructions upon the best mode of undertaking his pilgrimage, a piece of information which was doubly agreeable to Mobarek, since it afforded

him a hope that he would thereby secure a friend now so needful, and who might be of the greatest service to him. Accordingly, with the good will of the merchants, he continued to travel under their protection until the caravan reached the neighbourhood of the capital city of King Kamram.

Mobarek having reached his destination took an affectionate leave of his benefactors, and proceeded to search out the abode of the promised holy man. He was well known in the city, being one of the chiefs of the law, and, consequently, his house was soon pointed out to the deposed and wandering Shah.

It was a mean looking habitation, situated close to a mosque, where the good man was wont to hold forth to a large congregation of admiring followers. Mobarek entered with confidence, for it is one of the privileges of the good, (or those reputed to be so,) to attract the unfortunate, and he straightway made his way to where the saint was seated, and then stood before him.

He found him an old man, with a face so wan, that death has not a paler aspect, his

under jaw protruded, producing the appearance of a sneer, and, indeed, were it not for his eyes, which were extremely vivid, he might have been taken for the representative of a dead patriarch, or a ghost of ghosts. He was dressed in the coarsest manner, wearing an old sun burnt cloak over his shoulders, whilst a band of black cloth was bound round his temples, which encreased the lurid cast of his face in a manner fearful to behold.

Mobarek, who never could entirely forget that he was a King, and who had always been in the habit of receiving rather than giving presents, in approaching the holy man had entirely forgotten the necessary ceremonial of not appearing empty-handed.

Now this was a slight which no man in authority can brook, and there was none who forgave it less than the holy old man. The display he made of poverty, in truth concealed a mine of inward pride, for in proportion as he appeared to humble himself, so much the greater were his exactions of respect and submissiveness from others.

Like one of those sacred trees from whose

withered branches the sick hope to gather health and prosperity, so abided the decrepit saint in his wretched mansion in all the dignity of poverty and self-righteousness, ready to communicate his wisdom to all those who approached him with proper marks of deference ; but severe and repugnant to those who were negligent of due respect.

Seeing a man before him of sufficiently ill-favoured aspect, mean in his attire, not bearing a present in his hand, and appearing to exact rather than to bestow respect, the old man casting his quick eye upon him, exclaimed :

“ How is this ? what has happened ? are we something here or not ? ”

“ May it please you, *O merdi Khoda !* ” said Mobarek, “ I am come to lay the case of an unfortunate man before you, who has at present no other hope of relief, excepting what Allah in his mercy may place in your lips. Such as you see me, I am a King ! ”

In the room where the old man presided, a congregation of his followers was seated, and when they heard the words of Mobarek, they

all shouted "Allah! Allah!" in surprise, succeeded by expressions of contempt and derision.

"What words are these?" said the old man turning his keen eye towards Mobarek, "do Kings walk about the world like mad dogs, making it a curse to see them? Has sense left thy brain, or perhaps was it never there? Speak, oh man, wherefore come you to me, for I who am the poorest of the poor, the less than the least, what have I to do with one who calls himself a potentate, a shadow of Allah upon earth?"

"That I am a King is no fault of mine," said Mobarek, "I was born such, and the decrees of God are inscrutable. I have been changed, the face I wear belongs to another. That I am a wanderer and an outcast is also no fault of mine—such is destiny; but yours will be the fault, oh man! if you should refuse to give heed to my words, and hearken to my representation. Wherefore do you enjoy the reputation of wisdom and sanctity, if you reject the supplication of the wretched and necessitous, and wherefore make this show of superior

holiness if you act not accordingly? I tell you that I am a King, dispossessed of my throne by the base act of a sorcerer and a necromancer, and that I require advice what to do and how to act."

"That you are a King," said the old man, "I am not here to deny, if so, receive my congratulations, good luck attend you, and long may you reign."

Upon these words, a burst of derision came from his followers:—he then went on and said:

"But if a King, wherefore come you to me? There is a King in this city, wherefore not seek him? Do you not know the words of the poet?

Kings herd with Kings, and Mufties Mufties bless,

What dog the great will live with dog the less?"

Mobarek seeing it hopeless to interest the feelings of this perverse old man, turned away in disgust, resolving to defer making his vow until he had seen the King his brother-in-law. His heart failed him when he considered how wretched and hopeless was his situation, and he reflected in sadness, that per-

haps he might produce as little impression upon his relative as upon the old man of God.

The King enjoyed great reputation for sanctity, and was celebrated throughout the country for the strictness with which he upheld the Mohamedan law. He cherished priests, and was always ready to act under their guidance. In his person he exhibited all the exterior of sanctity. His arms were loaded with rich amulets, the '*bismillah*,' was engraved on everything belonging to him, such as his sword, his spear, his drinking cup, his ring and armlets. The dress he wore was one of mortification and penance, never arraying himself in his royal robes excepting upon great occasions.

His palace was everywhere inscribed with holy invocations, sentences of the law were written upon the door posts and met the eye at the summit of every gate. In short, the ear could turn in no direction but it heard words of sacred import, and the eye saw nothing but what reminded its owner of his obligations to receive the faith.

Mobarek seeing all this, felt confidence that

his brother-in-law would not refuse to listen to the petition of an unfortunate man, and recollecting what he had heard from the merchants of the caravan concerning his beloved Khoshboo, his heart beamed with hope, that his miseries would soon be at an end.

“*Ilhemdillah* ! praise be to Allah,” he exclaimed, “I shall be restored to the beloved of my soul, and with the help of the prophet and of my brother, I may regain possession of my throne and revenge myself upon the miscreant who has usurped it.”

He almost blessed the old saint who had refused to hear him, and with these and such like feelings he bent his way to the royal palace to seek an interview with the King. Little, however, was he acquainted with the character of the man he was about to address, and still less with human nature in general.

His brother-in-law, in fact, was a man of a weak mind, bigotted, prejudiced, and acting upon impulse, and whose great boast and exultation was, that he owned the King of Cashgar for a brother-in-law. Although but a petty chieftain, commanding over a small district, he gave

himself the airs of royalty, bid much defiance, and in all circumstances of perplexity, invoked the name, friendship and relationship of the King of Cashgar as his principal protection.

The great difficulty to contend with for one so totally unprotected and unknown as Mobarek, wearing the garb of poverty was to approach the person of the King and obtain a hearing. He made several attempts to enter the palace, and to make his voice heard at the daily selam, but was always beaten off, and he probably might have died of hunger in the streets, had not a circumstance occurred which dissipated his fears and gave fresh courage to his hopes. Seated in a corner of the great square before the palace, looking wistfully at the gates, hoping that some lucky dispensation might be awaiting him, he perceived a procession of strangers arrive, who by their appearance he felt assured were from Cashgar. The principal object in this procession was a *Taktaravan* or litter, indicative of a lady of consequence, and observing it narrowly, he was convinced that it must contain his beloved Khoshboo, and that she was now putting into practice that which

had been reported in the caravan by his friends the merchants. He arose from his seat with a bound and ran towards the litter. He was not mistaken for it was the incomparable Khoshboo herself—he could not contain his joy at the sight, and approaching exclaimed:

“Khoshboo, my eyes! my soul! see the misery of your Mobarek—I die—I die.”

All the bystanders deemed him insane, and he was driven away with indignity, but his words sank deep into the very soul of his mistress, who seeing the very person who had frightened her almost to death in her own apartment at Cashgar, became confirmed in the persuasion, that this man was, indeed, her husband, her beloved Mobarek, suffering from the effects of sorcery, and that the sorcerer was no other than the present possessor of the throne of Cashgar.

She entered the palace gates of her brother, the King Kamram in a state of such excessive agitation, that when called upon to alight from her litter, she almost forgot the circumstance of her arrival, and was slow in acknowledging

the marks of respect and attention which were paid to her by her brother's attendants, and by some of the older servants, who had known her as a child.

She was conducted to her apartment, and was informed that the King would not be long before he came to greet his sister, but she scarcely heeded the intelligence, and remained wrapt in a state of abstraction, her mind possessed by the one fact that she had seen her beloved Mobarek, wretched and forlorn, an outcast from the world.

“It was his voice—it was his very manner,” she exclaimed to herself; “nothing could make me mistake it—but, oh what a horrid person;” upon saying which, she placed her two hands before her eyes. “What a face! what a hideous expression of countenance! alas, how different from his own real—his dearly beloved face—when will it ever be restored to him?”

Upon her very first interview with her brother, she determined to describe the whole case, to explain her reasons for leaving the court of Cashgar, to inform him of the present

abject situation of her Mobarek, and entreat his assistance for the purpose of restoring him to his throne and his face.

The King Kamram being taken quite unawares by this sudden apparition of his sister, was astonished and displeased.

“Wherefore,” thought he, “has she left the court of Cashgar, and the protection of the King my brother-in-law? She has done evil.”

And he was the more confirmed in these doubts, when he received a letter from that King, informing him to be on his guard against a certain impostor, who possibly might visit his court, declaring that he was the lawful King of Cashgar, but dethroned and bewitched by a sorcerer.

“There must be something wrong here,” said he, as he proceeded to pay a visit to his sister.

As soon as Khoshboo perceived her brother she ran towards him, and after making a demonstration of the pleasure she enjoyed in seeing him, which he acknowledged but coldly, she exclaimed :

“If you be a man, Kamram, and by the

same blood which flows in our veins, I conjure you to hear my story to the end, and when you have so heard it, to help your sister to encounter the difficulties into which she has been thrown by the decrees of fate."

"We will see," said Kamram without a corresponding emotion, "we too have something to say—speak on."

"First then," said Khoshboo, "it is plain, and a received fact by all, that the whole city and court of Cashgar has been struck with the evil eye, and that the hand of an evil destiny is now pressing hard upon them. I was as happy as a woman could be in the love of the most incomparable husband that was ever decreed to a wife. He adored me as much as I loved him. We lived for each other—I was the envied one of all the harem. The fairest of the fair smote their breasts as they thought upon my superior happiness, and those who were rich in wisdom would willingly have become fools to have enjoyed, for a moment, the distinctions which were heaped upon me, your sister. In one most unfortunate day, the city was convulsed by an earthquake. Mobarek,

upon whom he blessings, had on that morning issued forth to make one of his usual excursions, disguised and unattended, for the purpose of detecting and correcting abuses, but when he returned to his palace, it was plain that he had been overwhelmed by the same misfortune which had struck the city, and he returned a totally new and altered man. He wore the same face, 'tis true—he enjoyed the same beauty of features, the same divine expression of countenance, but everything else was gone; his harmonious voice was replaced by the speech and tones of a ruffian—his engaging manners had become rude and coarse, and his tastes, from having been as refined as those of an angel, became all at once as sensual and disgusting as those of the lowest camel driver or mountebank. From that moment, I was not only discarded from his presence, and the lowest and vilest of the harem preferred before me, but I was treated with the coarsest indignity; I was told that I was not fat enough — that my cypress waist was a deformity, that my singing was without effect, and that if I did not drink wine and revel in impropriety, I

might abstain from attendance upon the Shah; I then became as much despised as before I had been courted. Your sister, from being the flower and chief of the harem, was esteemed an incumbrance; and thus degraded, thus despised, I determined to leave the Shah and to take refuge with you my own natural protector. Now, there can be no such sudden effect without a cause—a man cannot lose his intellect without some affection of the brain, and a King who had once been perfection, cannot all at once become the vilest of his race. Every one is now convinced that sorcery has been exercised, that the King has been changed, and it is now ascertained that a certain poor wretch dressed like an inhabitant of the west, ugly, ill-favoured and hideous to behold, who attempted to make his way to the palace and the harem, who asserted in different parts of the city that he was the Shah, who possessed my Mobarek's voice and manners, that he in fact is the victim of sorcery, and that the all-wicked magician had taken his place on the throne.

“These facts are confirmed by assertions made

by a barber of Cashgar, who shaved both the sorcerer and his victim, on that very same day of the earthquake.

“ But what has convinced me more than all that the person in question is Mobarek, is the circumstance of his having sought me in my own apartment in the palace in a manner that none but one who was well acquainted with the premises could have done. When he knocked at my door and called upon me by name, I became convinced by his voice, that he was there in person and flew to meet him. I then perceived the hideous stranger, the effect was too great for my feelings and I almost died with the shock, but true it is that the heart and soul of my beloved Mobarek is imbodyed in that vile and degraded form—that there it is to this day, and that he who now occupies the throne of Cashgar, is a miscreant usurper. I must, moreover, inform you, O brother, that I saw that very same unfortunate man, the dethroned King, my own husband, in the crowd as I entered the gates of your palace. He called to me with his own well known voice, he now exists in your very city, and it is to redeem

him from his present state of abject misery, that I call upon you for assistance."

When Khoshboo had ceased to speak, Kamram her brother paused for a while, and looked exceedingly grave.

"These are strange words that you have spoken," said he, "can such things be? Reflect a little. A man for twenty years of his life may prefer lean lamb, then all at once he may like it fat—there is nothing extraordinary in that—a man's voice is known to change in one night—one day it is sweet, the next it is rough. He may admire different things at different times—circumstances make him gross, and circumstances make him refined—there are natural causes for all things, without running to evil eyes and necromancy for what we do not understand. And so, my sister, I think you have been mistaken. You have been slighted by your husband (and what woman is sometimes not slighted?) and you have become angry and impatient, and instead of waiting for the return of your husband's love, you have come to me, who cannot bring it back, do what I will. You have done wrong, sister Khoshboo.

My brother, the King of Cashgar is a great King—I will see your wretched man, whom you think to be your husband, bewitched, if so it pleases you, but I must tell you that I already deem him to be an impostor, for I have been informed by my brother the King of Cashgar that such a man will appear before me. You may if you please find him out, and cause him to be brought before me, but as I said before, I make no doubt that he is the impostor, promised to me from Cashgar.”

Khoshboo again repeated what she had asserted, and combated her brother's arguments to the utmost of her power, but all she received in answer was the simple permission to discover Mobarek among the inhabitants of the city, and straightway to cause him to appear before the King. This she soon did. She immediately described the person of her husband to one of the heralds, and orders were given that he should forthwith be taken before the King Kanram.

She was now tormented by many conflicting feelings, for should her brother prove unfavourable to her views, she felt that Mobarek's

situation and her own would be almost hopeless ; she also could not hide from herself that it required all her love for the character and amiable qualities of her husband, to overcome her horror and distaste for his present person. So convinced, however, was she that it was indeed Mobarek who was thus disguised, that she was determined to undergo every privation, and proceed to every extremity, rather than abandon the hope of seeing him restored to his own lawful face.

Mobarek was not long in being discovered, for the man who could have behaved in so public and extravagant a manner on the day of the princess's arrival, could not fail being a marked character. When the herald announced to him, that the King had ordered him to his presence, his heart leaped for joy, for he felt that he had been recognized by his beloved mistress, and that she was the cause of his being so distinguished. He eagerly insisted upon proceeding immediately, and accompanied the herald with exultation and thankfulness.

King Kamram being conscious of his own

weakness of character, never felt safe without an adviser, and as this was a question which required discrimination, he thought he could not do better than to send for one of the heads of the law, and consequently desired that the *merdi khodai*, the man of God, whom we have before described, should attend him. As soon as he appeared, Kamram questioned him narrowly, concerning the powers of necromancy, whilst at the same time he confessed his own doubts, as to the possibility of one man being able to change himself into another.

“May your Majesty’s house prosper,” said the old man; “by the salt of the King, I swear that though such things are said to be, yet saying is one thing and doing is another. Now in this very city abides a man with a dried up brain, who calls himself by right a King, asserting that owing to the powers of magic, another has exchanged skins with him. He seeks for justice, demanding back his own skin, as if it only required a firman from the Shah, to peel a true believer, and take his face from him.”

“You have forestalled wit, and taken the words from my mouth,” said Kamram; “praise

be to Allah, we possess men of wisdom, and masters of accomplishment, ready to be our advisers! This very individual is now to appear before us and you, O man who live by wisdom, you will sift his understanding, and ascertain which of his words are wise, and which the contrary."

"By the soul of the Shah," said the old man, "the world is coming to an end when Kings run wild without their faces, seeking for justice. Let us see him first, and then we will speak such words as Allah may put into our mouth."

Upon this Mobarek, who was in attendance, was called in and forthwith stood before King Kamram, and the *merdi khodai*. He adopted the attitude of one who was himself a King, and although meanly dressed and repulsive in countenance, yet his manner and behaviour commanded respect.

"Come forwards," said Kamram, eyeing him from head to foot; "tell us who you are what are your pretensions, and wherefore are you here?"

"Were I to speak in my natural form, I

should tell you, O King, that I am Sovereign of the kingdom of Cashgar, and your brother in-law, and that my true position is on the throne of my ancestors. But destiny has dealt severely with me—Allah in his mercy has sent me misfortunes, and I now appear before you, with another man's face, an outcast, and apparently an imposter. I have already related my deplorable tale to this servant of the prophet now seated before you—he has not believed my words—therefore how can I hope that you, O King, will give them credence, unless some light from heaven more brilliant than that which illumined his brain, shall be vouchsafed to you. One appeal however, I can make which may perhaps produce conviction, and that is, to my wife, your own sister, the princess Khoshboo—let her speak, and she will assert, that my words are not false, and that though in face I am not the King Mobarek, yet in voice, manner, and sentiments, I am unchanged; should you require more proof, she will bid you seek the miscreant who has usurped my throne, who, though he possesses my face, still in voice, manner, senti-

ments and conduct is totally different—I have spoken, what more can I say?”

“This is wonderful,” said Kamram, “it is more—it is impossible—what say you, old man,” addressing himself to the reputed Saint.

“Your slave’s words are these,” said the old man. “That there is such a power as magic, no man can doubt, for do we not read of it in books? It is no secret that devils, gholis, jins, and peris exist, beings who entrap men and women, and cause them to sin, producing the thousand strange events for which we cannot account: therefore to assert that there is no such power, would be to set reason at naught. We are apt to call every thing *kismet* and *takdeer*, destiny and fate, when perhaps unseen beings are at work for good or for evil. A man one day is full of vigour and life, see him the following year, he is not to be known, he has been smitten with what we call an evil eye. He becomes withered, sallow and disgusting. May not this be the case with the individual before us? He may tell us that a magician is his enemy, who has ruined his prospects in life, and moreover may assert that the

man who sits on his throne, has also usurped his face. I too may say that old age has usurped my youth—I once was handsome, but now my beauty and freshness are fled, and I am left with the old lean and withered stem of a face, that you now see before you. I might call myself a King, and so I was the king of those who admired and loved me, but like him I am now neglected, and I sigh over my lost features and attractions. My wife too, she affirms that I am altered in person, but still my voice, manners and sentiments are the same. Then what shall we say?—are you, O King, to place yourself at enmity with the powerful Sultan of Cashgar, because an unknown stranger asserts that that potentate is not a true King?—I am the true King, says the intruder—I possess his ugly face; he has got my handsome one;—send an army to accompany me, that I may kill him, and recapture my face. Are you to run the risk of ruining your kingdom, O King, in order to place a proper bit of flesh upon its proper head, when after all it may be the wrong one? Allah forbid! God has not put sense into our brains to make so absurd a use of it—

Let him depart, and Allah go with him. As he has lost his face by magic, so let him regain it;—let him seek the country of the magi; they will inform him how to proceed.—Should what he seek exist on the surface of the globe, and his face be at Cashgar; let him seek it there, and not trouble your presence. I have spoken—what more can your slave say?”

When the old man had done speaking, the King Kamram paused ere he gave his decision as to Mobarek's fate, and having pondered a while at length said, addressing him,

“Our brother of Cashgar has warned us to be upon our guard against an impostor, therefore we are upon our guard—we listen to the advice of the old man of God, and we approve his words. We will not assist you to seek your face—we will not order out our armies and our men of war for such a purpose—therefore, in such hope put not your trust—moreover we will not hurt you, but go your way—seek other assistance, and God be with you.”

Mobarek upon hearing these words, proved himself to be a worthy disciple of the prophet

and an inflexible true believer. Although his features exhibited indignation, yet he was resigned to his fate. He straightway would have departed, but recollecting his beloved Khosboo, paused and said,

“King Kamram and brother in law! for such you are, do and say what you will! you have refused me your assistance—so be it—Allah is great—Allah is merciful—man is born to suffer—therefore, why should my fate differ from others? there is only one thing I ask, and I do so as an unfortunate man—you who write God’s name on your door posts, inscribe it on your person, and (let us hope) engrave his image on your heart, you in all consistency must grant me my request. I ask to see my wife the princess Khosboo;—that she is so, there is no doubt—should she discard me, again I say, Allah is great and merciful, so be it, I will not commit the sin of uttering a complaint; but should she acknowledge me, then you cannot forbear your consent. You must allow us to see and to converse. Say not no, for the misery attendant upon such a denial, will be great and grievous.”

Kamram referring this demand to his adviser, the sage passing his hand over his face and beard, turned up his eyes and said,

“*Zarar yok*—there is no harm done, *Olsoun*—let it be.”

END OF VOL II.

THE MIRZA.

BY

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THE MIRZA.

HISTORY OF MOBAREK SHAH AND THE MAGICIAN, CONTINUED.

THE King Kamram then ordered that his sister the Princess Khoshboo, should be apprized of the presence of Mobarek, and when matters were prepared in the harem, he was allowed to enter, precautions being taken for preserving the necessary decorum—Khoshboo was placed on one side of the door, whilst Mobarek stood on the other, King Kamram and the old priest the meanwhile taking post at a convenient distance. When Mobarek was apprized of the presence of his wife, he exclaimed,

“Khoshboo, my eyes—I am Mobarek your husband—do you acknowledge me?”

“ Yes, yes,” said Khoshboo, “ can you doubt it? whatever happens, your faithful wife will never more separate from you—though you are changed in person, still you are the same in mind and heart—I will be yours till death.”

“ Be not rash, light of my life,” said Mobarek, “ Listen to my words, before you take a final resolution. Your brother, the King Kamram rejects my pretensions, and calls me impostor. He desires me to leave his city. I am, as you know, hideous to behold—I have no dwelling place—no home—I am rejected by all—an outcast—poor, and without hope of riches. My first dependance is on Providence, and next in the hope that I may acquire sufficient knowledge in the arts of magic, to destroy the spell under which I am bound, and thus regain possession of my throne. I foresee great hardships—want—fatigue—long and arduous journies. Dearest Khoshboo, reflect upon this before you make your decision—pause ere you call me husband; whichever way you may decide, this I swear, that your Mobarek will ever live in the hope of one day calling you his own again; but he cannot invite

you to partake of his miseries ; all he requires is, that you do not abandon the hope of again becoming the partner of his kingdom."

"Hear me, Mobarek," exclaimed Khoshboo, with energy and determination, "you know me little if you look upon me merely as a fair weather wife. I am yours in weal or in woe ; my conviction that you are my own husband, though in disguise, is fixed ; that conviction is inspired by Allah, and nothing shall deter me from following you throughout the world, discarded though you be by my brother, or seeking your fortune in fatigue and in travel. One thing only I entreat of you to grant, which you must allow out of consideration to the weakness of my sex. Exhibit your present face to me as little as you possibly can ; let me rest in the illusion that I am living with the Mobarek whom I first knew, who has ever been the pride of my life, the only man I have ever loved, the only one I ever will love, whom I will always obey, and will ever cherish."

This conversation ceasing, Mobarek turned towards Kamram, and said :

“ You have now heard the determination of your sister, and are acquainted with her feelings. You cannot be cruel enough to separate us—let us depart hence—should fortune favour me you will hear from me again, and then, perhaps, you will regret the part you have taken in this matter.”

Kamram once more turned to the old man and said :

“ Have you heard ? can it or can it not be ? ”

“ Let them go, in the name of Allah and the prophet,” said the sage ; “ when a woman is run away with by illusion, she is like a bramble carried across the plain in a whirlwind, nothing can stop her ;—let them go, Allah go with them.”

The King Kamram, without more words, allowed his sister to follow the bent of her inclination—for he was embarrassed by her presence, and glad to be rid of her importunities. He insisted only upon one stipulation, which was, that they should quit his city and territory in all secrecy, lest the King of Cash-

gar should complain that he had acceded to the wishes of one denounced as an impostor.

Khoshboo was ordered to travel, divested of all external show, and adapt herself in everything to the position in which the man she called her husband was placed. The constant wife acceded to this without a murmur; her courage was excited, she was impelled by enthusiasm, combined of love and disdain, and proudly bidding her brother a scornful farewell, she thereby made him understand how utterly she despised the unmanliness of his conduct. She would accept of no benefit from his hands, and appointing a rendez-vous at the city gate with her husband, at the early dawn of the ensuing day, she left the place of her birth without any attendant but him who she felt was her appointed protector by the decrees of destiny.

Here was to be seen a Princess, unrivalled throughout Asia for beauty and accomplishments, humbly mounted on an ass, followed by her husband, a King on foot, with

no protection save the sword by his side and the staff in his hand, both thrown upon the surface of the globe, to seek their fortunes as the speed of Heaven might direct.

Khoshboo was veiled from head to foot as a woman ought to be, whilst Mobarek, who felt how much his wife's happiness depended upon his keeping his own face covered, managed, by ingeniously accommodating the folds of a turban to the obnoxious features, much in the same manner as the Arabs of the desert protect themselves from the ardour of the sun, he screened himself effectually.

They travelled onwards for some time in silence. Mobarek's gratitude for the sacrifice which his beloved wife was making in his behalf, knew no bounds whilst she revolved in her mind how she might best relieve her husband from such like feelings of obligation. When they had travelled so far that the city was no longer in sight, they stopped, and whilst Khoshbooa lighted from her ass, Mobarek tended it to a spot where it might graze in safety. Then carefully covering his face, they sat down

side by side under a tree, and thus conversed.

“Khoshboo, light of my eyes, and beloved of my heart,” said Mobarek, “what words have ever been invented, or what ingenuity can ever draw up from the depths of my feelings language sufficiently eloquent to express my love and gratitude? Let me kiss the print of your footsteps, let the dust of your slippers be ointment for my eyes, let me do anything however servile, to shew you how truly I esteem your kindness. But, my love, no one was ever kind in vain; you will reap golden harvests for this, even in this world, for I feel a something within my breast which tells me, that no King and Queen have ever undergone vicissitudes such as ours, without some speedy and violent reaction. However, laying aside such like expectation for the present, we must form some plan for the future. Tell me, oh my fair one, whither shall we first bend our steps?”

Khoshboo heard these words with mixed feelings of joy and grief, her ears enjoying the sound of her husband's voice, and hearing the expression of his sentiments

with delight ; whilst her eyes were averted from him, lest she could catch a view of those features which would dissipate the illusion and make her sicken with loathing. She said, " Let not the conduct of your faithful Khoshboo be too highly valued. She pursues only that which is her duty. Once convinced that you are her true and lawful husband, what else can she do ? Let our energies now be turned to the one object of liberating you from the thralldom of your present state. We must seek the country of the magi, acquire their science and then return and punish the usurper of our throne, by wresting your own lawful face from his vile carcase, and restoring to him his most unblest features. We must turn our steps towards the west, and may Allah and his holy prophet protect us."

" Yes," said Mobarek, " after having been driven from Cashgar, such was my original intention ; it was my intention to make a vow, permitting the hair of my head to grow its full length, vowing that no razor should approach it until I was reseated on my throne, and thus

perform a pilgrimage to the tomb of the prophet Nauh el Nebi. But now, light of my eyes, that scheme is at end—I devote myself to you—we will go seek, wherever it may be found, a counter-spell to the horrible one which affects me, and may Allah in his mercy direct our footsteps.”

Having conversed for some time, and by mutual expressions of confidence in the decrees of providence, soothed their minds into resignation, they proceeded again on their journey. But ignorant of the road and of the relative position of places, they pursued a track, which instead of leading them on to the high road of Samarcand, conducted them into a valley where they became entangled in the intricacies of the mountain scenery.

They had brought sufficient food to last them for the first days’ sustenance, and consequently were so far independant, and being unwilling to hold communication with King Kamram’s subjects, they avoided villages and determined to pass the night in some mountain cavern.

With this view, striking into a deep dell,

Mobarek followed a path which led through a delicious succession of woodlands, and which gradually ascending, brought him to a spot so secluded from the gaze of man, that he determined there to take up his quarters. He caused Khoshboo to dismount from her beast, and placing her in safety under a rock, which formed sufficient protection from the weather, he there spread his cloak, and gathering leaves and brushwood, made her a bed, whilst the packsaddle of the ass, became a substitute for a pillow. Then spreading the meal before her, he invited her to recruit her energies with food, whilst he proceeded to a distance to perform the same operation, lest she might behold his so much dreaded face.

Scarcely had they finished their meal, when, to their surprize and apprehension, they heard the sound of horses' footsteps ascending the mountain in the same direction which they had come, accompanied by men's voices. Mobarek immediately drove the ass from the spot where he was openly grazing, to a dense part of the wood, and placed himself in such a posi-

tion with Khoshboo, that they might see the intruders without being themselves seen.

As the strangers approached, it was discerned that they consisted of two horsemen fully equipped, and armed from head to foot; fierce and rude looking men, and strange to say, wearing a dress, parts of which assimilated to that worn by Mobarek. Their horses appeared overcome by fatigue, and they were themselves dusty and way-stricken.

Having reached the spot immediately facing Mobarek and Khoshboo they drew up, stopped and looked back, as if awaiting more companions. And in so doing, they continued their conversation as follows :

“ It is in truth wonderful,” said the youngest to the older horseman, “ that so long a time should have elapsed since we heard from him. Is he dead think you, or do you think he has intentionally played us false.”

“ What do I know,” said the elder man, who was called Cheikh Omar, “ what do I know, Norouz? Our Chacal Bey is not an every day man; with that secret devilry of his he performs strange things. Perhaps, he has

changed himself into another, and could not change back again; we must put our trust in Allah and have patience."

"That is very likely," said Norouz; "to say the truth, when we were at Cashgar the other day, I could not help indulging in strange suspicions. Every one was speaking out boldly upon the alteration which had taken place in the King, and that he was not the same man he was known to be before; but as Allah is great, such a thing could never be."

"What words are you throwing into the air, youngster!" said Cheikh Omar. "Chacal become King of Cashgar—that would be fine, indeed, that would be like making a horse of an ass with a vengeance; besides, I know enough of the devil's magic to know, that Kings cannot be touched; they are too well guarded by talismans.—No, no, he is working out some money scheme, and before long we shall see his ugly face come back with loads of treasure at his back. Gold is the god he adores—he does not care for kingdoms; what could such a swine as he do with a kingdom?"

“ We shall see,” said Norouz ; “ time will tell us all things ; but here come the others.”

Upon which several additional cavaliers appeared and formed altogether a formidable body, who collectively wore every appearance of being a band of freebooters. They paused for some time, and the whole of their discourse consisted in expressions of surprize at the absence of Chacal, who was evidently their captain, and of speculations as to when he might be restored to them.

During this short rest, they expressed unbounded joy at having ultimately reached their home, regretted the toil and fatigue expended in an unsuccessful search after their leader, and then turning their horses' heads towards the ascent of the mountain, gradually disappeared from before Mobarek and Khoshboo.

It may be imagined with what intense interest the houseless wanderers lent their ears to what they had just heard. Their hearts rose in their mouths, their pulses beat with double speed, and a thousand schemes immediately came into their heads. Khoshboo, with

all a woman's quickness, was the first to perceive the advantages likely to accrue from the disclosures thus overheard.

"Joy of my soul," she exclaimed, "I see it all, your Khoshboo already sees you on your throne. We must now be upon our guard, active and circumspect. All depends upon you, Mobarek! If you be a tolerable actor, and will condescend to personify the hateful Chacal but for a short time, ere a week has elapsed you will again possess your musnud."

"I will do anything (but commit an injustice) to right myself and to please you," said Mobarek. "I also perceive the whole scheme, and please Allah! I will immediately attempt to accomplish that which our good destiny has so evidently placed before us. Did I not foretell this morning, O my Khoshboo, that some speedy re-action would succeed to this unnatural state of suffering?"

It was then agreed between them that Mobarek should follow the band of freebooters into their retreat, and personifying Chacal, appear before them. He would then give them a woeful

account of his failure in the scheme of bringing away booty from Cashgar. Then stating how much he had been disconcerted by the earthquake, he would cheer them by laying before them a new prospect of gain, no less than plundering the treasure contained in the palace of the King of Cashgar, to the success of which he would stake his head, seeing that he possessed one, now in his company, a woman, an inmate of the royal harem, well acquainted with all the avenues of the palace, and who could conduct them to the very spot where the gold was deposited, having once been herself depositer of the keys of the treasure house.

Having invented this scheme, they passed the night in anxious expectation of the morning, determined to put it into execution.

As soon as Mobarek was on foot, having warned Khoshboo not to leave her hiding place, but patiently to wait his return, he set off in search of the habitation of the freebooters. Tracking the footsteps of the horses, which after much winding gradually led to the entrance of a large cavern, he stopt for a moment to take breath and to collect his

thoughts preparatory to the part he was about to act.

He had scarcely paused a minute, before he beheld the very youth seated on a stone at the mouth of the cavern, whom he had seen in conversation with the elder horseman; and who having caught sight of him, arose, apparently greatly surprized, and then uttered an exclamation of joy, which echoed throughout the place and brought many of his companions forth.

“Come! come!” he cried out, “the Aga is come!” Then running towards Mobarek, he said, seizing his hand and kissing it, “You are welcome, your place has long been empty.”

Others also came running forward, and among them Cheikh Omar, who appeared to be the second in command after Chacal, and he made lively demonstrations of pleasure upon beholding Mobarek.

Mobarek in the meanwhile was slow to speak, fearing lest the sound of his voice might awaken suspicion, but at length feigning to be ill, he said with a sick man’s accent,

“Allah alone is strong, alone is powerful—we, what are we?”

“What has happened?” was exclaimed by various voices, whilst the whole assembly gazed at each other insurprize, seeing that, indeed, there was a great dissimilitude between Mobarek’s voice and Chacal’s.

“Is he ill?—perhaps he is changed, can this be Chacal Beg?” were questions asked in various tones, until Mobarek again spoke and said,

“I have been ill—my voice has long failed, but please Allah, I shall be better after I have related my story. My good destiny has turned upon me—takdeer has been perverse—I have lost everything, my horse, my arms. Oh that city without a saint, Cashgar!—Inshallah, we will burn its father still! But give ear, if I have not brought away riches, I have with me what will lead to them, so do not allow yourselves to despond—Chacal Beg will still lead you on to riches.”

Upon hearing these words, the assembled gang began to stare and wonder; they felt a sort of creeping incredulity as to the person before them, for both in manner and voice he was entirely different to their captain, but still

his face was not to be mistaken, and that was too evident a proof to be rejected. They flocked around him and requested him to explain what he meant, and how he came to be possessed of a guide to the King of Cashgar's treasures.

He made them sit down in a circle, and then with much ingenuity devised a tale suited to their capacities, by which he showed that during the earthquake, when he was about making a grand stroke which would have secured great riches, he was seized, and dragged before the authorities, his horse and everything he possessed taken from him, and he would, perhaps, have been put to death, had he not excited compassion in one of the King's favourite ladies, who having obtained his pardon, he was expelled the city. That during this event, from his knowledge in magic, he had discovered one of that lady's attendants, who being favourable to him, agreed to accompany him hither, and she was ready to assist in furtherance of the enterprize which he now proposed to them, adding, that she was deposited at some little distance, ready immediately to proceed. He proposed to enter the city at nightfall, the band

being disguised as peasants, armed, and collected into a body, nothing was so easy, with the knowledge of the avenues of the palace as to enter at once, overcome the small resistance which might be made, and carry off abundance of treasure before the authorities could be roused.

As the whole gang possessed unbounded confidence in their captain, knowing him to be a magician and capable of doing wonderful things, they did not for a moment doubt the practicability of his scheme, and when he finished his explanation, they expressed their approbation by exclamations of *Mashallah* and *Evallah*.

Mobarek seeing how well he had succeeded, took upon himself the airs of one in command, and although aware that he was remarked and gazed at with wonder and suspicion, still by constantly hinting how great was the power of magic, he confirmed them in the belief that the change which they observed in him was produced by that agency.

Having made every preparation to depart

on the following day, and being provided with a good horse as well as arms, both for himself and Khoshboo, his supposed slave, he then pointed out at the same time, the precise spot where he was to be found in case of need.

He found Khoshboo in an agony of apprehension, lest he should have failed ; but when he explained the whole extent of his good luck, and the manner in which he had brought the gang to coincide in his scheme, her joy knew no bounds. She would have rushed into his arms and embraced him, but he entreated her to recollect that he was still a monster, and it was only by continuing to be such for a short time longer, that he could be released, and restored to himself.

Mobarek was a most extraordinary character for an eastern monarch. With all the powers of despotism in his hands, he always possessed a conscience, and misfortunes having been decreed to him, they had greatly improved his original excellent nature, adding much to the

delicacy and refinement of that conscience. He sat down near Khoshboo and said :

“ Light of my eyes, my Khoshboo—I approach you for advice and consolation. We are now come to that pass, that I see blood must be shed in order to obtain possession of my throne ; blood must be shed, and that only by my own hand. The usurper must die ere I can be restored to my rights ; tell me, can I perform so hateful an act with the fear of God before my eyes ? ”

“ What ! ” exclaimed Khoshboo, “ are you to be deprived of your throne, your possessions, your very existence ; is a wretch to steal even to your face ; and can you doubt whether he be worthy of death ? The thief who steals five tomans is he not condemned to death by law ; what then can the man expect who steals a kingdom ? Fear not, dearest husband ; kill, by all means, kill—only be careful to say *Bismillah*, before you entirely cut off the traitor’s head, and then all will be well. Fear not, fear not—in the name of the prophet kill.”

Mobarek only required the concurrence of his dearest friend and adviser to reconcile him to performing an act which he abhorred, and having obtained that consolation, his mind became easy. He felt that the only mode of destroying the spell by which he was bound, was to destroy the cause of that spell, and having so done, he became certain that his own features would return to him.

Matters having been prepared for the departure of the expedition on the following morning, we must now return to the position of affairs at the court of Cashgar.

Chacal was a monster of iniquity, a coarse, sensual, and rapacious villain. As soon as he began to find that he was secure in the possession of the throne, and that he could proceed with safety in a career to which, by no stretch of imagination his thoughts had ever aspired, the iniquity of his nature became thoroughly manifest.

'Tis true that he had found much to contend with in the outset, but power and submission being already made to his hand, and cre-

dulity ready to confirm what the eye acknowledged, his course of iniquity was fully open to him.

Sometimes, indeed, the acts of the usurper were almost too offensive, and too much at variance with the conduct of his predecessor for even a native of Cashgar to submit to without a thought or a doubt. His total ignorance upon all matters of government produced in the minds of his grand vizier and his secretaries of state, a conviction that he was overtaken by madness, and having made up their minds upon that head, they could never conceive that it could be attributed to any other cause. His principal characteristic was love of money—a lust for gold. His whole soul was absorbed in the one desire of amassing riches, and now feeling that he was possessed of power, and saw before him a whole nation which he contemplated as the mine into which he might dig without intermission, he did not care what acts of cruelty he committed, provided he gratified his ruling passion.

The people began to feel oppressed, and

comparisons were freely drawn between the present conduct of the sovereign and what it had been before the earthquake. Certain facts related by the barber Teeztrash, and confirmed by the journeyman cap-maker, which at first had been received as fiction, were now firmly believed as true ; and thinking people began to conclude, that Cashgar had been entirely bewitched.

Prayers were privately put up at the mosques for a change ; the dealers in magic, wise men and astrologers were consulted, and it was hoped, when the vengeance of Allah had been appeased, that some supernatural interposition would be manifested, which would as miraculously dispel the scourge as it had been miraculously applied.

At the particular time to which we allude Chacal was entirely absorbed in taking account of his money in the underground apartments where it was deposited, and there he passed much of his time, devising plans for securing more. His heart swelled with exultation when he found how large was the treasure

of which he was possessed, but still he required more. He publicly announced that a certain sum was necessary, and ordered it to be exacted by force if requisite.

Already the work of extortion had begun. The Jews first, those unpitied objects of robbery, under various pleas were despoiled of their goods. Presents were exacted from the rich, whilst no scheme of duplicity was left untried to secure an interest in matters where merchandize was concerned. The labours of the bastinado were in full activity upon the refractory from morning till night in the courts of the palace: no one felt safe in the possession of even the commonest necessities.

One act of cruelty led on to another, until the whole city was thrown into a continuous state of apprehension. The immediate attendants of the palace became lax in their respective duties, the person of the Shah was hated, and each in his inmost heart fervently prayed that every day might prove the tyrant's last.

Such was the state of things on the day when Mobarek and Khoshboo, followed by the

gang of freebooters, approached the city of Cashgar. They entered just before the closing of the gates, by two and three at a time, and leaving their horses in an open space near one of the caravanserais under the care of two of the gang, they took refuge in some adjacent ruined buildings for the night. At a preconcerted hour, the whole gang were to collect near the secret entrance of the palace, headed by Mobarek and Khoshboo, and then picking their way stealthily along, they would find access through avenues well known to their leaders into the gardens of the harem, and ultimately into the very body of the building where the King reposed. When the moment for enterprize was come, Khoshboo felt the alarm natural to woman's weakness, lest it should fail; but Mobarek finding himself at the very gates of his own palace, treading the soil of his native city, and exerting himself for the welfare of his subjects, so much was his heart inspired by feelings of conscious dignity, by a sense of what was his duty as well as his due, that his arm was strengthened and his determination inflexible.

“My Khoshboo!” he exclaimed, “in another hour your husband will be King—fear not, but proceed.”

Then turning towards his followers he said :

“Keep silence, and follow; let no man shed blood till I give the word—follow me and observe my actions.”

They entered the secret gate unmolested; no one was astir; it would seem that the guards had been bribed to silence, so little appearance of watchfulness was there about the palace. They glided silently through some deserted courts until they entered the gardens of the harem. Here Mobarek stopped and marshalled his followers afresh.

Every step was now well known to him and Khoshboo, for often had they enjoyed these shaded retreats in each other's society. Mobarek here put up a mental prayer, entreating the protection of Allah and the prophet, then drawing his scimitar, clasped it well in his hand, and proceeded to the chamber where he was sure, from information gathered in the city, that Chacal was wont to repose. Khosh-

boo was close to him—he ordered the gang to pause and be prompt. He then cautiously stepped forward, and perceived that the great curtain was lowered over the window straightway ordered it to be withdrawn, in order that it might throw light within, and then without more disguise, boldly threw open the door and entered, followed by his wife. He saw a bed extended in the midst, and at the foot thereof two women asleep. The noise he made on entering awoke the principal person, who, rising from beneath the embroidered coverlid, instantly discovered to Mobarek his own face.

He required no other indication to ascertain that he had secured the proper victim, and without giving him time to defend himself, flew upon him, sword in hand. Chacal, in the meanwhile, at a glance seeing himself opposed to himself, became aware of his position, at one bound stood on his feet, and seizing a pillow, attempted to ward off the blow about being dealt to him, exclaiming at the same time :

“*Amán ! Amám !* pity, oh pity!”

His gang, suddenly hearing the well-

known voice of their captain, advanced in a hurry to the spot, but arrived just in time to behold the breaking of the enchantment which had bound the lawful King of Cashgar. With one fell blow having brought his antagonist to the ground, Mobarek followed it by another, which severed his head from his body, and at that moment he felt that he was himself again. Khoshboo perceiving his well known countenance, fell at his feet in rapture, and the whole harem having by this time been roused, women, guards, and eunuchs came running in great haste from all quarters, and produced a scene which may, perhaps, be better imagined than described. The lawful King, sword in hand, standing near the headless body of his enemy, was surrounded by those who had approached him, kneeling with their foreheads touching the earth, whilst the gang of freebooters, startled and astonished at what had taken place, remained in a state of bewilderment, uncertain how to act.

“See,” said Mobarek, as he pointed to the dead man, “see the effects of a lie—my face has been a lie, and this wretched man’s face

has been a lie also—such is and such will ever be the fruit of all deceit—sooner or later it must be visited by evil.”

His first act was to send for the barber Teeztrash; his next to order an assembly of the great officers of state, whilst he insisted that the body of the traitor Chacal should remain exactly in the same position in which it had fallen, to be guarded by his own gang, who were ordered to remain in attendance.

When the extraordinary event, which had occurred in the palace, was known throughout the city, a sensation was created such as had never been before witnessed. It was quite certain that a strange man had arrived, and killed the King, but marvellous to say, the King was there still. Such was the news. It was also certain that the barber Teeztrash had been sent for. Every one was in expectation of something still more miraculous. The hearts of men leaped into their mouths with joy, at the bare idea of a change.

The barber Teeztrash followed the King's officer with fear and trembling; he had frequently spoken his mind upon the state of

things, and made disclosures of all that had taken place in his shop, asserting thereby how much he was convinced that magic had been resorted to in giving Cashgar a bad King in exchange of a good one. He, therefore, became the prey of uncertainty and apprehension. As he approached the palace, and was conducted through its avenues leading into the harem, his apprehension increased, for he found them thronged with the dignitaries and officers of the court, their faces full of anxiety, and eagerly pressing forward to satisfy their curiosity.

As soon as Teeztrash appeared before Mobarek, the King having obtained a glimpse of his person, called to him by name, and said :

“Stand forward, O man, look you hither.—See this head,” pointing to that of the prostrate Chacal, “say, is this the head you operated upon on the day of the earthquake?” The barber taking it up with great reverence, inspected it and exclaimed :

“As I am your slave, it is—here is the slit in the ear which I remarked.”

Then said the Shah, before the assembled

crowd, vizier, dignitaries, men of the law and others,

“Then it is plain that this is my enemy; the necromancer, the man who has worn my face, and whose face I have worn. This is the miscreant whom, through the mercy of Allah, I have slain, and am thus restored to the throne of my ancestors.”

Rejoicings, such as had never before been known, broke out in the city of Cashgar, and throughout the whole territory thereof. The reign of terror was over, and people blessed their true and lawful King. Mobarek having dismissed the gang of freebooters with much of the treasure which he had promised to them, recommended them never more to appear in his dominions, and despatched troops to see them well out of it. He also sent proper messages and admonitions to his brother-in-law, Kamram, giving him many salutary warnings and recommending him, who professed to set the law of Allah always before him, not to restrict his actions to words alone, but to shew his faith by being charitable as well as holy. He sent a new cloak to the old man of God, and ordered him to

wear it or incur his displeasure, for that he would not allow so unblushing a hypocrite as he to live in his neighbourhood, a disgrace to his profession.

Having performed these acts, he then devoted himself to his beloved Khoshboo, cherished her as the greatest of all earthly treasures, and the annals of Cashgar relate that no King was ever before or after so beloved and respected as Mobarek Shah. As for Teeztrash, the barber, there was no end to his sagacity, and all in good time he became grand vizier to the illustrious state of Cashgar.

After I had complimented the Mirza upon his story, assuring him that so far as my opinion went, he had redeemed his pledge of giving an appearance of truth to a miracle, I asked him whether he had any ulterior object in view in relating it to the Shah.

“What can I say,” answered my friend, “perhaps yes, perhaps no. The truth is, in this our Persia, and particularly in this our court, we are overrun with hypocrisy—go where you

will, we find men with two characters, or as the vulgar saying is, beards with two colours. I wished to shew, in the character of Chacal, how impossible it is for a man to succeed long in disguising his real disposition, and in the person of Mobarek, to illustrate the truth that no station, however exalted, is exempt from the vicissitudes of life. It was my aim to denounce that common species of duplicity, where the wicked man deceives his neighbour whilst his face wears the appearance of honesty, as well as to point out how providence frequently, by unexpected means, induces the discovery of guilt."

"As you live," said I, "you have not spoken ill; a sharp witted nation like yours will perceive how strongly precept can be inculcated by parable; but tell me, how am I, a stranger, to distinguish the hypocrite from the true man?"

"You," said my friend, "who are new to our manners, who are unacquainted with the interior of our harems, and ignorant of the first rudiments of our education, cannot but be unpractised in our tricks and deceptions. Now

what are the elements of our education, but the elements of deceit ! The first thing we are taught is the art of making compliments, *chum wa hum* as it is called—a child who can scarcely lisp, particularly be he a prince, or the son of an Omrah, will exercise his little tongue in pouring forth a string of phrases of which he knows not the meaning, and utter them with appropriate gestures, as if he were the first of men. But it is among our priesthood, that the vice I complain of is the most conspicuous. A very large turban is one of the insignia of godliness—some of the Mollahs of Ispahan wear them of immense sizes, and in addition have ample sleeves to their cloaks, with large skirts, in order effectually to cover their hands and feet when they are seated, by way of shewing humility and deference, whilst at the same time, it is their ambition to be ushered to the uppermost places at the *mejlis* or assembly. They would be incensed were they not so distinguished ; for all their outward demonstrations of piety are only put on as a passport to obtain respect. Then they sigh forth holy aspirations and quote largely from the Koran. But see

our praying places, which are conspicuously erected, high and open to the gaze of all the world, at the city gates or in the market places, there you will often see men ostentatiously saying their prayers, apparently absorbed in holy meditation, whilst their object is to acquire a reputation for sanctity. The persons who thus exhibit themselves, generally wear a mortified look, particularly in the month of the Ramazan, to announce to the world how rigid is their fast, and they are most scrupulous upon all things clean and unclean. They will break any vessel that has been touched by impure lips, or used for unlawful purposes — they study the uses of all such vessels—some to honour, some to dishonour. All meats are well known to them, in their clean and unclean qualities, and they will condemn a man to the miseries of Jehanum for ever, who may have transgressed in the smallest particular, provided he has so done to be seen by man, whilst they will pass over in silence some flagrant act of deceit or iniquity. Now it appeared to me, that in the character of Chacal I have exemplified the hypocrite, who under

the face of one eminently good and beloved, performed acts the most odious, and the most to be reprobated."

"I fear," said I, "that as long as you are governed by a despotic King, from whom alone emanates all advancement and distinction, that duplicity will be one of the principal vices of your court. Where there is no independence of character, there can be but little individual exertion, and where there is no individual exertion, the general well-being is at a low ebb."

"What can I say?" remarked my friend; "you speak of a thing of which we know nothing—what means independence? it means nothing to us, who are never certain whether what we are toiling to obtain, be it riches, be it other worldly advantages, will remain ours beyond the moment of actual possession. A despotic Shah, an injured vizier, a grasping favourite, a corrupt judge are all leagued against a nation's weal, and the system of government, which they induce, makes slaves of us all."

"And will the Shah understand," said I, "can he comprehend all the recondite meaning contained in the story?"

“If he does not,” said the Mirza, “it will be my business to make him understand; we have our own modes of conveying unpleasant truths to royal ears.”

“But supposing he did comprehend,” said I, “and was willing to correct abuses, what have you to propose by way of remedy? Have you any specifics for making corrupt statesmen honest?”

“As Allah is the true Allah,” said the Mirza, “I have never thought of any remedy beyond the *felek* and the scymitar. Have you any remedy to propose? You, I know in your country, do many strange things, and adopt contrivances which were never thought of since the world began; perhaps you may have a remedy against thieves and liars?”

“You do not say ill,” said I; “you will perhaps not believe me when I tell you that we have provided a remedy against such an evil.”

“Speak,” said my friend, with great animation; “whatever you will say, I am ready to hear, and what is more to believe.”

“Well then,” said I, “without recurring to the aid of talismans, charms, or diviners, we

simply allow every one, who chooses, to write down, print on paper, and publish to the world his thoughts and observations upon the actions of men, and to give an account of passing events. This scrutiny, which is subject to certain laws, is the great secret by which we controul dishonesty, and secure integrity, and this would be the remedy which I would propose in this country, against the deceit and hypocrisy of which you complain."

"*Astafarallah*, heaven forbid?" exclaimed the Mirza—"what words are these? would you fill the city with poisonings and murder—would you throw the whole nation into one universal turmoil of rage and violence? You do not know the Persians! however smooth-tongued in their speech, and polished in their manners they may appear, yet vanity is their ruling passion, and there is not the lowest mule driver who would bear to be criticized and commented upon, without a desire for revenge. No, no," said my friend, shaking his head, "keep to your modes of securing public virtue, we must keep to ours, and we have only one, which is the stick. A good felek and four

stout tent pitchers, will do more for us than all your newspapers."

The remainder of our conversation, which continued to embrace the same subject, is not worthy of being recorded, and after having sufficiently puzzled my friend upon the nature of the liberty of the press, of the manner in which it acted upon the whole nation, and upon its advantages as well as the contrary, I left him, securing a promise that he would not fail to communicate to me any future stories he might narrate.